Lessons and Lectures on Ayurveda

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Although the information contained in this book is based on Ayurvedic principles practiced for thousands of years, it should not be taken for or construed as standard medical diagnosis or treatment. For any medical condition, always consult with a qualified physician.

Illustrations and drawings by Dr. Vasant Lad

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Introduction

Dr. Vasant Lad introduced the first-ever Ayurvedic home study program in 1983. It proved so successful that he expanded it into book form as *Ayurveda, The Science of Self-Healing*. The growing number of students ready for a deeper examination of Ayurveda has necessitated revision and upgrading of the home study course.

The present course is meant for those who have read Dr. Lad's book. From time to time references from this book will be given to assist the student in understanding the particular topic being discussed. As in the previous course, an essay-style questionnaire has been appended to the end of each section, serving as a self-administered test. This questionnaire should be completed in full and returned to The Ayurvedic Institute, P. O. Box 23445, Albuquerque, N.M. 87192 for evaluation. Suggestions can thus be made regarding areas in which greater application is needed to obtain full benefit from the course. A glossary is included at the end of each section defining unfamiliar Sanskrit words.

I am proud to have been a student of Dr. Lad's at Tilak Ayurveda College, Poona, India, and to be his colleague now. My interpretations of Ayurvedic doctrine sometimes differ slightly from his because in Ayurveda each physician is expected to carve out his own niche in the healing arts according to his or her innate capacities. At all times I have tried to make Ayurvedic concepts easily understandable to the Western mind.

Both Dr. Lad and I were privileged to have been students of a great Yogi and Aghori named Vimalananda. I owe a profound debt to Vimalananda for his guidance and love and, following the age-old Indian tradition, I salute him at the beginning of this composition.

For those who desire deeper knowledge of Ayurveda, provision for intensive study has been made. Prospective students should contact The Ayurvedic Institute for full details.

Ayurveda has existed for more than five thousand years and has been transmitted from teacher to student in an unbroken lineage. Those who have embarked upon the study of Ayurveda are now part of that lineage and bear the responsibility for ensuring that Ayurveda is transmitted to the next generation. We salute you, and pray that your efforts are abundant in fruition.

Namasté,

Robert E. Svoboda

Robert E. Svoboda

LESSON ONE

History and Philosophy

Although Ayurveda has been continuously practiced for at least fifty centuries, no written books existed until perhaps 500 B.C. Before that date all teachings were memorized. They were mainly poetry and by repeating them in cadence for several hours students could learn them easily. Each day the teacher would assign new verses and, using them as a guide, would demonstrate his own medical secrets to the pupils.

This method for preserving vast quantities of information via mnemonics (memory tricks) was devised by the all-knowing *rishis*. Its beauty is displayed every time an Ayurvedic physician diagnoses a patient and recalls to mind the verses, or *sutras*, which relate to the diagnosis and treatment of the patient's disease. Those verses jog the memory and stimulate the recall of all the details he has been taught on the subject.

This approach is especially important today. Such a flood of medical information has occurred that it seems an almost impossible task to organize it all coherently. However, with the help of the *sutras* of

Ayurveda and a knowledge of their basic principles any healing theory or technique can be easily catalogued. Thanks to the "Eight Limbs" of Ayurveda every aspect of modern medicine has already been prefigured long ago. These eight branches of the healing tree are: internal medicine, surgery, eye-ear-nose-throat, obstetrics/gynecology/pediatrics, toxicology, psychology (including treatment by ritual), rejuvenation and virilization. Students of internal medicine should study carefully the Ayurvedic treatise written by the famous writer Charaka, who is generally acknowledged as the authority in that field. Sushruta is the writer who wrote the best treatise on surgery. And Vagbhata is acclaimed as the master of *sutras* for general knowledge of all aspects of the Ayurvedic science. Although dozens of good texts exist in Sanskrit, even today most Ayurvedic physicians rely on these three texts to teach themselves about the needs of today.

Fundamental to Ayurveda is the Sankhya system of philosophy (see Chart One in *Ayurveda, The Science of Self-Healing*, p. 17). Each of its twenty-four principles is still as valid today as it was when the Sankhya system was propounded, long before the birth of modern science. Each of these twenty-four principles can be correlated with modern concepts. For example, the Ether of Sankhya is identical with the "field" postulated by quantum mechanics. The field is the source of all the atomic particles and yet has no interaction with these particles. It is the source from which all atoms are manifested and into which all dissolve again millions of times each second, and still it has no connection with anything occurring in the physical universe.

The theory of the five elements is not exotic. Earth represents all that is solid in the universe, Water the liquid, and Air the gas. Fire is the force that changes matter from one phase to another and Ether is the laboratory in which all this activity takes place. Ayurveda only concerns itself with five elements and not the 104 elements of modern chemistry because all those 104 elements can be classified with the help of our five elements. Ayurveda is much more interested in the determination of the energy present in a system and the way in which that energy affects the organism than it is in the actual physical

composition of the system. Also Ayurveda, like modern science, believes that the simplest theory that explains all the facts is the best theory.

This text will try to keep the theory as simple as possible, and will present as much as possible in the form of *sutras* to encourage memorization and retention of knowledge. Charaka's definition of medicine seems an appropriate place to start. He enumerated the purposes of medicine:

> To determine what helps to preserve health and what helps to destroy it
>
> To determine what helps to eliminate disease and what encourages disease to develop and grow
>
> To determine the best methods for increasing the individual lifespan.

With regard to the final point there is no use, says Charaka, of having a long life if one is not healthy enough to enjoy it. Medicine is therefore a way of working with Nature to heal, to remain healthy and to promote longevity. Charaka also states that no doctor has ever cured any patient because it is only Nature who can cure. Healers are not expected to work wonders or perform miracles, rather they are guides who help patients work through their problems at all levels. Ayurveda is a way of life and this humble attitude of living with Nature and cooperating with Her to promote maximum health must be the Ayurvedic student's attitude from the very beginning. There is no cause for pride in achievement or for self-satisfaction, for there is no end to the possibilities of harmonizing the organism.

Health is harmony of body, mind and spirit. Disease occurs in an individual when the body is unbalanced, when the mind is distressed or when the spirit is oppressed, or it may occur when one component of this triad is emphasized to the detriment of the remaining two. But because each component — body, mind and spirit — have different aspects and therefore different needs the Science of Life has three divisions: Ayurveda, Yoga and Tantra. Ayurveda concentrates on the physical, Yoga on the spiritual and Tantra on the mental aspects of

being. Ayurveda views disturbances in the mental and spiritual aspects of an individual's existence from the body's frame of reference, working first to harmonize the body and then to extend that harmony to the mind and spirit. Yoga works with the spirit to induce the body and mind to fall into line and harmonize thereby. Tantra works to maximize mental energy which then balances and harmonizes body and spirit. The ideal is to progress from the grossest to the subtlest forms of harmony to achieve the closest possible integration with reality. And this is true not only of human beings but of all living things. Ancient tomes of Horse Ayurveda, Elephant Ayurveda and Tree Ayurveda exist, and their authors state that each principle—*dosha*, *dhatu*, *mala* and so forth—that is to be found in the living human being is also to be found in horses, elephants and plants. The only difference is that, while animals and plants may instinctively treat themselves for disease, humans can deliberately make the choice to go beyond disease and cure to a new state of existence.

All beings exist in the great ocean that is *Prakruti*, taking in nutrients and throwing out wastes. Health is determined by the efficiency of this inward flow of nutrients and outward flow of wastes. Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of a regular supply of healthful physical nutrients (food) and regular excretion of physical wastes. Yoga concentrates on spiritual nutrients and spiritual wastes, and Tantra on mental nutrients and mental wastes. The progression from Ayurveda to Yoga to Tantra is a progression from relative dependence on the external world to relative independence from it, from a condition in which one is harmonized by relying on inputs from outside to a state in which one is always in harmony regardless of one's external environment.

However, it is essential to begin with the physical because the body is more stable and easier to balance, and because only when physical health is achieved is it sensible to attempt serious practices of Yoga and Tantra. Early man could not control his physical environment as we can today. Sick people then had no alternative to Nature as a source of remedies, and their primitive nature facilitated

the development of a strong intuitive faculty. Ayurveda, developed thousands of years ago, is an intuitive medical system and the more one develops one's intuition the easier it will be to understand Ayurveda and to employ its basic rules in new situations in one's own life. The more closely one becomes attuned to Nature, the more one approaches the ideal of the intuitive healer. *Sutras* are meant to act as keys to ignite the intuition. In our study of Ayurveda we will try to organize our knowledge in the traditional way to facilitate the development of intuition and, for this purpose, each lesson will begin with a *sutra*. This lesson will end with five *sutras* that are fundamental to our study. They are:

> *Everything that exists in the external universe has its counterpart in the internal universe of the human body-mind-spirit complex.*
>
> *Air, fire and water are the three principles most fundamental to life.* They appear in the body as *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* and their subtler forms are *prana*, *tejas* and *ojas* respectively. They represent, in order, the cosmic urges to movement, transformation and stability.
>
> *Like increases like.* Under certain circumstances "like cures like" and under other circumstances "like causes like" but always "like increases like," by the principle of resonance.
>
> *Food is medicine, medicine is food.* Food is that which is digested, medicine is that which helps it to digest.
>
> *Whatever affects the body affects the mind and vice versa.*

LESSON TWO

The Three Doshas

Air, fire and water are the three principles most fundamental to life.

This lesson is meant as a review of the three *doshas* with emphasis on explanations of why they have been described as they are. For example, Ether and Air are taken together to constitute *vata* because both are ethereal and Air can exert its effects only when there is empty space available. *Pitta* is composed of Fire and Water because the body is 75% water and Fire could not exist within it except in association with water, as in stomach acid which is "hot" because it can burn when it is out of its protected area. A burn from stomach acid has the same symptoms as a burn from lightning or from an open flame and differs from them only because it is contained in Water. Likewise *kapha* is composed of Earth and Water not only because they are the heaviest of the five elements but also because pure Earth in the body only obstructs its functions. Every instance in which there is pure solidity in the body is a disease condition, like kidney stones and gallstones. Only when Earth is in solution in Water is it beneficial to the organism.

Dosha versus *Dhatu*

Vata, pitta and *kapha* are referred to as the three *dhatus* of the body when they are balanced and they are called the three *doshas* when they are out of equilibrium.

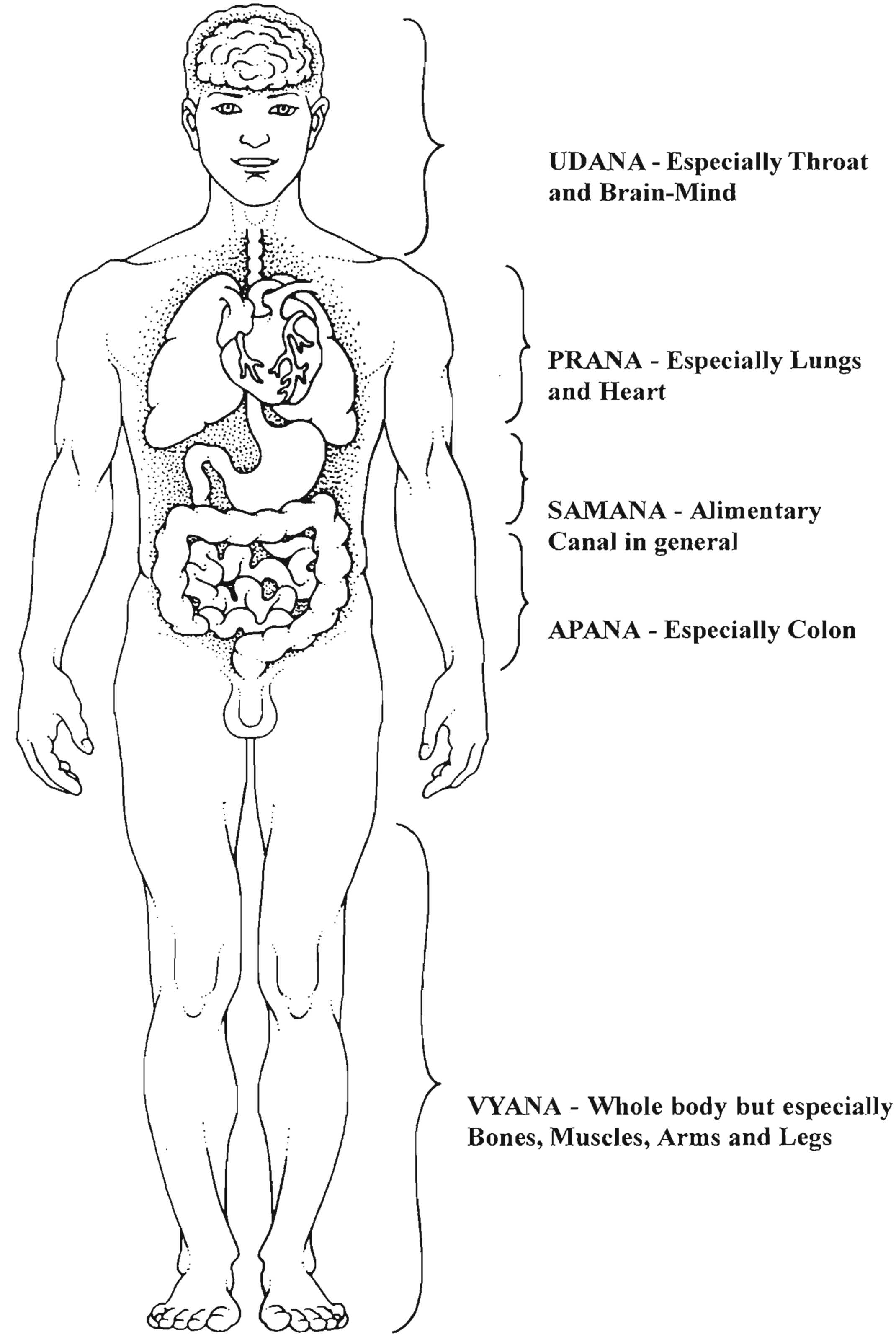
This reflects the fact that the motion of *vata*, the digestion of *pitta* and the stability of *kapha* are all essential to life. Because the *doshas* are basically waste products they can act as *dhatus*, or supporters of the organism, only as long as they perform their functions while moving out of the body. Mucus, which is a form of *kapha*, does good service protecting sensitive tissues and trapping dust, but it must be expelled regularly from the body by expectoration or by defecation. If it accumulates, it will cause disease. Likewise with the bile, a form of *pitta*, that works properly only when it is discharged into the gut and expelled in the feces, and the *vata* that is released from the body as it causes other wastes to be released. The three *doshas* are forces, not physical manifestations, but when they accumulate they cause accumulation of physical substances with which they are associated and this leads to disequilibrium and disease.

The basis for disequilibrium lies in the *sutra* "like increases like." Whenever there is a disturbance in the balance of air, fire and water in the external environment there will be induced a like disturbance to *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* within the body, according to the principles of resonance. Table One reviews the qualities of the *doshas*.

Because of the *sutra* stating that all which exists in the macrocosm exists in the human microcosm, it is instructive to use physical analogies to explain why the *doshas* are associated with their specific qualities.

Table 1: The Three *Doshas*

	VATA	*PITTA*	*KAPHA*
COMPOSITION	Ether + Air	Fire + Water	Earth + Water
ATTRIBUTES	Dry, light, cold, rough, subtle, mobile	Unctuous, intense, hot, light, malodorous, fluid, liquid	Unctuous, cold, heavy, dull, slippery, sticky, thick
FUNCTIONS	Movement (breathing, flow, excretion), nervous system and sense organs	Transmutation (digestion, cognition, understanding), body heat and temperature	Lubrication, strength, endurance and stability
MENTAL ASPECTS	Mentation (the thinking mind)	Intelligence (cognition)	Memory (mental stability)
EMOTION	Fear, anxiety	Anger, lust	Attachment, greed
PRINCIPAL LOCATION	Below navel	Between navel and diaphragm	Above diaphragm
SPECIFIC LOCATIONS	Bladder, colon, pelvis, thighs, bones, heart, lungs, head, ears	Sweat, blood, small intestine, skin, eyes, brain, liver, spleen	Joints, heart and lungs, brain, stomach, mouth



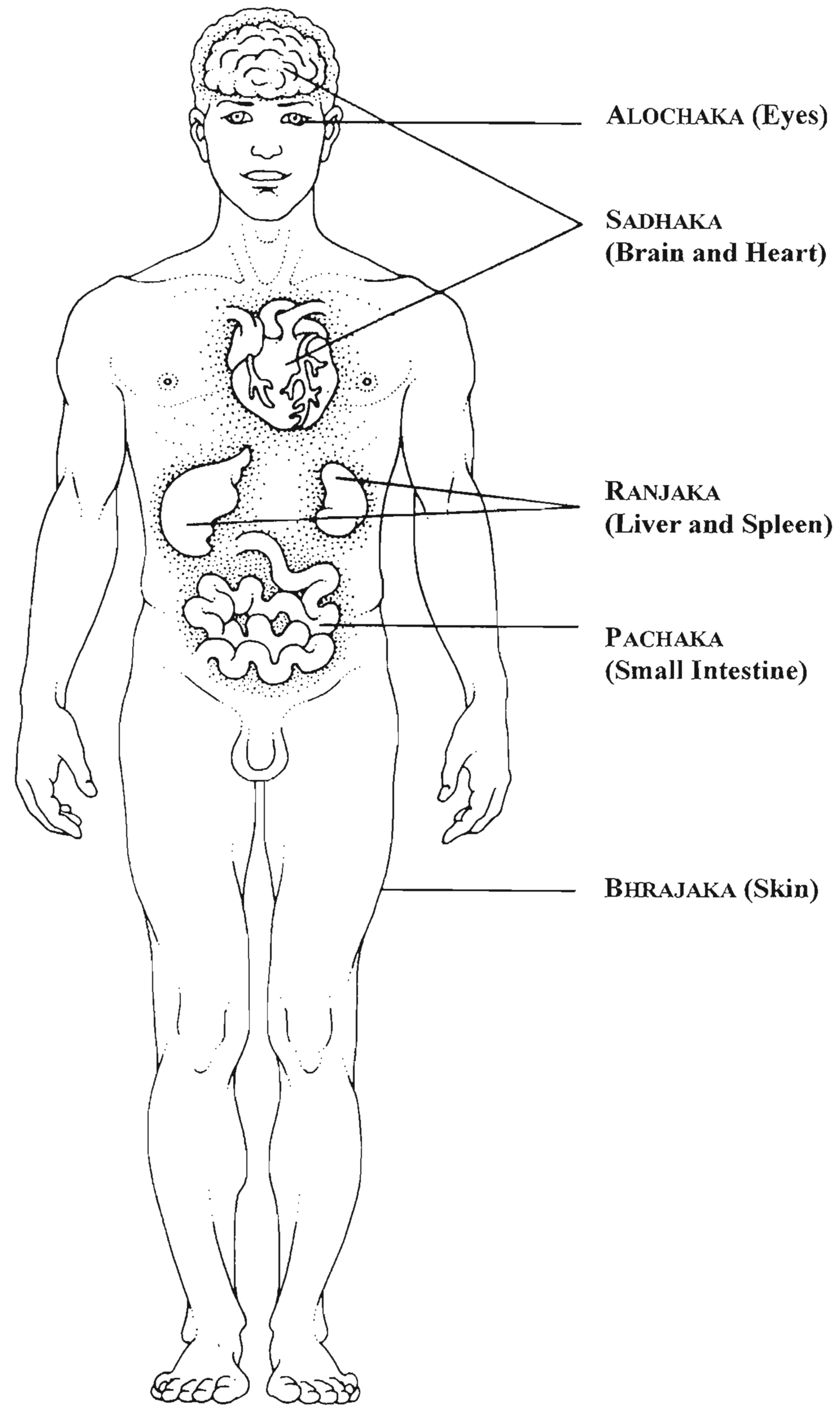
THE FIVE FORMS OF *VATA* - FIGURE 1

Table 2: ***Vata Dosha***

SUB-DOSHA	*LOCATION*	*FUNCTION*
UDANA	Throat and above	Speech, memory, capacity for effort, strength of will Clarity of sensory impressions
PRANA	Between diaphragm and throat	Immediate nourishment of the vital force Inhalation, exhalation, heartbeat, movement of food through esophagus into stomach
SAMANA	Between diaphragm and navel	Balancing Prana and Apana Movement of food through stomach and small intestine Absorption of nutrients from digested food
APANA	Between navel and anus	Delayed nourishment of the vital force Excretion of urine, feces, flatus, semen, menstrual fluid, fetus
VYANA	Whole body but especially bones, legs and arms	Circulation of blood and other fluids throughout the body Transmission of nervous impulses to and from periphery Locomotion Perspiration

Qualities of *Vata*

Wind in the physical universe is drying, light, subtle and mobile. These qualities are self-evident. The cold and rough attributes are due not to any structural characteristic of air, but rather to its functional effects. Wind erosion makes mountains jagged and craggy, it roughens them. Wind itself is not rough but its effect is. Likewise even a hot wind may cause cooling in the body because of evaporation of sweat. In wind, as in all other substances, attributes exist not only in substances but in activity.



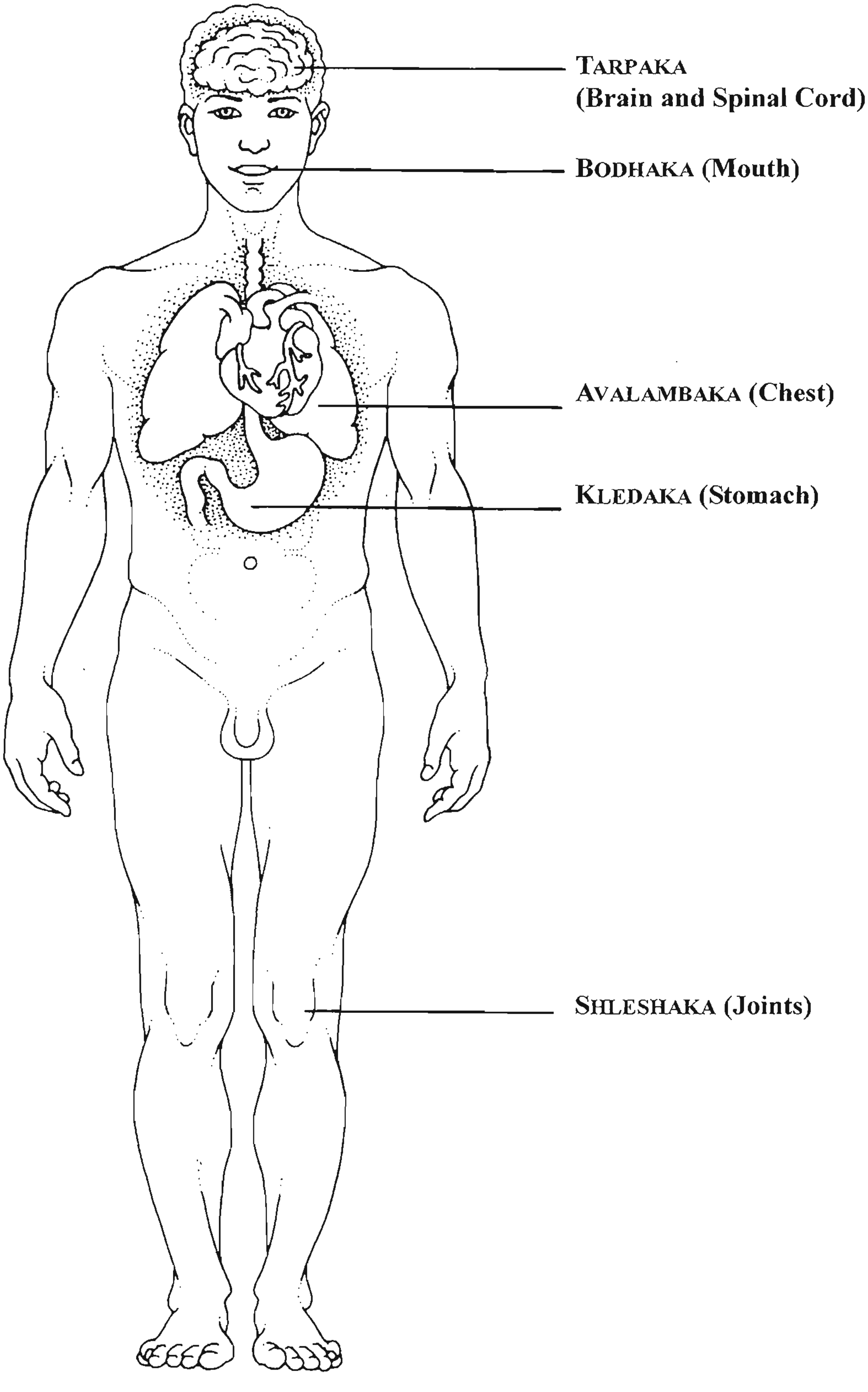
THE FIVE FORMS OF *PITTA* - FIGURE 2

Table 3: *Pitta Dosha*

SUB-DOSHA	*LOCATION*	*FUNCTION*
ALOCHAKA	Eyes	Sight Digestion of light and color Causes eye luster
SADHAKA	Heart (both the heart in the chest and the "heart" of consciousness in the brain)	Cognition (which is conversion of raw sensory impressions into thought)
RANJAKA	Liver and spleen	Control of the production, preservation and destruction of blood
PACHAKA	Principally small intestine; also gallbladder, liver, pancreas	Digestion of food Regulation of body temperature
BHRAJAKA	Skin	Digestion of sunlight and all else applied to the skin Body luster Protection of body from external environment

Qualities of *Pitta*

External fire is certainly intense, hot and light. We can infer the oiliness, fluidity and liquidity of *pitta* indirectly by observing that those substances which increase *pitta* are often unctuous, fluid and liquid. Just as *pitta* is Fire contained in Water, any substance which increases *pitta* when eaten must also be created from Fire and Water. Direct Fire can only be taken into the body through the skin and the eyes. We know that *pitta* is malodorous because of its connection with blood and sweat. Blood is a "half-digested" tissue since it contains material which is awaiting full digestion at the tissue level. This incompleteness of digestion is a sort of "half-rawness" and in fact the odor of *pitta* is said to be the same as the odor of raw meat.



THE FIVE FORMS OF *KAPHA* - FIGURE 3

Table 4: *Kapha Dosha*

SUB-DOSHA	*LOCATION*	*FUNCTION*
TARPAKA	Brain and Spinal Cord (cerebrospinal fluid)	Lubrication and protection of nervous system
BODHAKA	Mouth (saliva)	Liquefaction of food Knowledge of food's taste via the tongue
AVALAMBAKA	Chest (mucus)	Lubrication, especially of pleura and pericardium
KLEDAKA	Stomach and Intestines (mucus)	Liquefaction of food
SHLESHAKA	Joints (synovial fluid)	Lubrication

Qualities of *Kapha*

All qualities of *kapha* are easily explained by the attributes of Water. Conventionally one speaks of mucus as being identical to *kapha* but, as noted above, *kapha* is the force which induces mucus to be produced and accumulated. All three *doshas* can circulate at will through the body and can exert their effects far from where they were originally produced. However, each *dosha* is concentrated in a specific area in the body: *kapha* above the diaphragm, *pitta* between the diaphragm and the navel, and *vata* below the navel. This arrangement is essential to counteract the effects of gravity. That is, excess *vata* is needed in the lower part of the body to return blood, lymph and wastes from the legs back into the torso and to excrete all collected wastes, and excess *kapha* is needed to overcome the tendency for all secretions to settle in the lowest part of the body, since lubrication is essential for the heart, lungs, sense organs and brain. *Pitta*, the mediator, governor and fulcrum between the two, fits in between near the center of gravity of the body. But besides this general rule each *dosha* is divided into five aspects, each of which has a specific role to fulfill. These are detailed in Figures One, Two and Three and their accompanying tables.

Actually there is only one *pitta*, one *vata* and one *kapha* in the body. These divisions are made because of the difference in the duties required of the three

doshas. It is almost as if this were an organizational chart of the workings of the body. These divisions are important in the pathology of disease. For example, in cases of indigestion perhaps only *samana* will be affected. That is, in the beginning states of that disease the *vata* in the rest of the body will function almost normally but the *vata* in the upper abdomen will be disturbed. If the disease is treated immediately then it is possible to limit the disturbance of *vata* only to the upper abdominal region.

But if the disturbance is great or if treatment is delayed, then there is a tendency for the *vata* of the upper abdomen—*samana*—to disturb the *vata* in the other parts of the body by the principle of resonance—like increases like. If *apana* then becomes disturbed, in addition to the upset stomach of indigestion, one might develop constipation or diarrhea. If *vyana* is disturbed, one might develop generalized body ache, lethargy and maybe even fever, if *vata* further incites *pitta* into imbalance. If *prana* is disturbed, one might suffer from nausea and vomiting thanks to indigestion, and affliction of *udana* might cause giddiness or heaviness of the head, or even a dull headache. In like fashion, disturbance of one form of *pitta* or *kapha* will, if neglected, disturb other forms.

When a *dosha* is disturbed that disturbance may affect one, several or all of its divisions. To illustrate we will consider three diseases characteristic of the three doshas.

A Characteristic *Vata* Disease

A typical *vata* disease is asthma. Its causative factors may be *vata*, *pitta* or *kapha* but its symptoms are characteristic of *vata*, to wit:

- Difficulty in breathing (disturbance to *prana*)
- Cyanosis, especially of lips, nails or extremities (disturbance of *vyana*)
- Accumulation of mucus in the lungs due to accumulation of mucus in the stomach (disturbance of *samana*)
- Constipation, and relief or lessening of attack by treatment with medicated enema (disturbance of *apana*)
- Deep-seated fear which leads to asthma attack (disturbance of *udana*)

A Characteristic *Pitta* Disease

A good example of a *pitta* disease is jaundice, a disease which includes but is not limited to hepatitis. In jaundice we find:

- Unusual revulsion for food (disturbance of *pachaka pitta*)
- Yellowed skin due to bile pigments (disturbance of *bhrajaka* pitta)
- Yellowed eyes (disturbance of *alochaka pitta*)
- Presence of bile-derived compounds in the blood (disturbance of *ranjaka pitta*)
- Mental disorientation: "seeing the world through a jaundiced eye," weird food cravings, bizarre emotional states, and reliving of previous anger (disturbance of *sadhaka pitta*)

A Characteristic *Kapha* Disease

Rheumatic fever is a good example of a *kapha* disease involving all five forms of *kapha*. Its symptoms are:

- A characteristic lesion consisting of a swollen, painful, tender, inflamed joint, always one of the large joints, usually the knee (disturbance of *shleshaka kapha*)
- A thickly coated tongue (disturbance of *bodhaka kapha*)
- Nausea characterized by heaviness and dullness in the upper abdomen (disturbance of *kledaka kapha*)
- Reduced sensory perception associated with delirium (disturbance of *tarpaka kapha*)
- Because rheumatic fever is a disease which "licks the joints but bites the heart," involvement of the heart valves (disturbance of *avalambaka kapha*)

In order to understand the relationship between *dosha* and disease proneness, it is essential to review how the *doshas* affect the individual constitution.

LESSON THREE

The Human Constitution

The individual constitution is determined at the moment of conception and remains constant throughout life.

Just as in the external universe, different areas of the earth have different climates—some areas being very humid, others being very hot and still others being very dry—each individual human has an inborn constitution, or *prakruti*, which sets physical and mental patterns for life. While *prakruti* does indeed mean "first creation," another possible meaning is "first reaction." That is, an individual's *prakruti* determines how that individual's body and mind will instinctively react when confronted by a stimulus. While this cannot be permanently altered, it can be ameliorated by appropriate habits so that these advantages can be obtained:

- Prevention of *dosha* imbalance
- Prognosis of disease: for example, a *vata* disease in a *vata* person will be difficult to treat because the *prakruti* will strengthen the power of the disease (by resonance—like increases like), whereas a *vata* disease in a *kapha* person will pass off with little treatment because *kapha* and *vata* are mutually antagonistic.

- Selection of appropriate treatment: for example, when treating a *kapha* disease in a *vata* person care must be taken to avoid disturbing the *vata*.
- Selection of appropriate rejuvenation therapy.

Natural Determination of *Prakruti*

While it is said that the condition of the *doshas* in the bodies of the father and mother is the primary cause for an individual's *prakruti*, there are actually four factors that come into play, each more significant than the next. They are:

1. The parents' intentions at the time of intercourse. Just as the parents' physical *doshic* patterns determine which sperm are permitted to reach the ovum, their mental states determine in great part the child's mental tendencies. If at the moment of conception the father has an excess of *vata* in his body, only those sperm that thrive in a *vata*-type environment will survive the ejaculation process. If the mother has an excess of *pitta* at that moment, her vagina and uterus will encourage only those sperm that thrive in a *pitta*-type environment, and therefore the child will have a *vata-pitta prakruti*. Likewise if the couple copulates only for recreation, out of a sense of obligation or, worse yet, under conditions of coercion or rape, these emotions will affect the chemical environment of the genitals and will induce like patterns in the child, be they fear, anger or whatever. Therefore the texts on embryology in Ayurveda insist that both partners undergo thorough purification therapy before uniting to create a new being. This purification will reduce the levels of the *doshas* so that it is unlikely they would be disturbed during the sex act. Specific diets are also recommended, for example, *ghee* and milk with herbs like licorice for the male and rice and lentils with oil for the female. Both partners should share the same intentions and should, if possible, recite the same *mantras* during coitus. Ayurveda likens the process of procreation with the process of creation of the universe, according to the principle of the

microcosm and the macrocosm. To preserve this perspective of reverence while engaged in creation of a new human life will have a beneficial effect on the child. Sex should be an act of worship, not an acrobatic contest or a source of grief and shame.

2. The heredity of the mother and father. This not only controls the very production of sperm and ovum, it also helps to determine food habits and thus tendencies for *doshic* imbalance. Also it influences the partners' emotional states.
3. The food and activity of the mother during pregnancy. The tastes present in the diet (sweet is best), the mode of exercise, the conditions of the home, clothes and ornaments all can affect, for better or worse, the already decided *prakruti.* Mental activity is of surpassing importance, because guilt or fear over an unwanted pregnancy or in fact any evil or inappropriate tendency will be directly transmitted to the fetus.
4. The conditions prevalent in the womb, cervix and vagina during pregnancy, including any trauma that might occur during labor.

Determination of *prakruti* is thus a complex process.

Evaluation of the Individual *Prakruti*

When using a chart to determine one's *prakruti,* (see *Ayurveda, The Science of Self Healing*, Table 2, pp. 34-35) the criteria must be applied to you the way you are, not the way you want to be or think you are or think you are supposed to be. You must think in terms of the way you have been generally throughout your life, and not merely how you are now since that may be due to present habits which have obscured some of the innate traits.

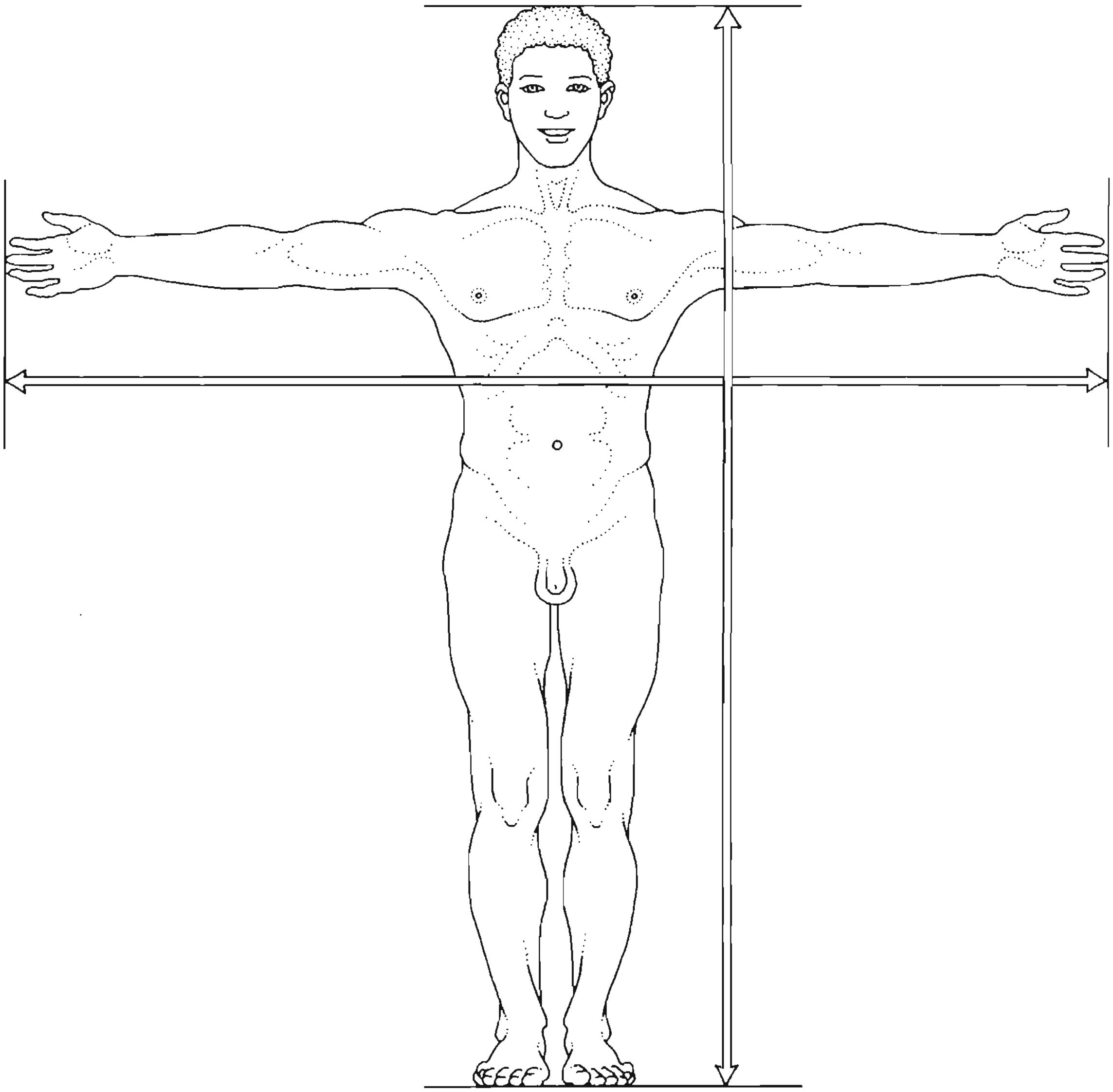
For this reason physical parameters are useful since they change less rapidly than do the mental ones. The body frame, for instance, is quite stable and should be measured with respect to one's own individual proportion. In Ayurveda, the unit of measurement is not standard for everyone but rather differs from person to person. It is

called the *angula* and is the width of the first interphalangeal joint of the middle finger of the right hand. Charaka and Sushruta mention optimum lengths and breadths for different body parts according to this *angula*. Of all the measures perhaps the most significant is the ratio between the person's vertical height and the distance between the tip of the right middle finger and the tip of the left middle finger when the arms are fully extended at chest height. In a body that is proportionate, these two values should be equal. A body in which there is extreme disproportion, for example, if the legs are significantly longer than they should be in relation to the torso, is indicative of a *vata* constitution. The *kapha*-type constitution comes closest to perfect proportions and *pitta* is somewhere in between. (See Figure 4, page 3 - 23)

The male shoulders should be 24 *angulas* broad and the male hips 18 *angulas* in breadth. The value for the female are precisely the opposite: 18 *angulas* for the shoulders and 24 *angulas* for the hips. These measurements are given in the ancient texts as ideal proportions.

However, for most criteria such permanent values are unobtainable and it is necessary to search for appropriate interpretations. This is especially important when evaluating a patient's *prakruti* because the patient will tend to interpret with a certain amount of bias which must be avoided if the results are to be both reliable and reproducible. Several suggestions:

1. Even in seemingly obvious categories always search for tendencies. An obese individual whose weight fluctuates greatly is much more likely to be *vata prakruti* than *kapha prakruti*. An individual who is sometimes constipated and sometimes afflicted with loose stools is not necessarily either *vata* or *pitta prakruti*. Tendencies in elimination are best tested by determining what laxative gives the best purgation to the individual. People who require strong purgatives tend to be *vata prakruti* and those who respond to milk, raisins or other mild laxatives are usually *pitta prakruti*.



MEASUREMENT OF BODY FRAME PROPORTION - FIGURE 4

2. Extrapolate attributes. A *vata* person is erratic in every habit because one of the attributes of *vata* is changeability or continuous motion. Criteria mentioned in ancient texts are meant to be extrapolated into modern situations. For example:

   a) Dreams—*Vata* dreams are kinetic in nature and involve flying, climbing, running, jumping, fleeing and emotions such as terror. Vata dreams are characterized by extreme mental energy and may exhaust the dreamer, leading to periods of intense dreaming alternating with days or weeks in which the individual cannot seem to remember any dreams. This erraticness—intense dreaming alternating with dreamlessness—is characteristic of *vata*.
   Pitta dreams involve transfer of energy, perhaps heat energy in the form of lightning or visions of the sun, or transfer of knowledge or of money, "green energy," or anger, the transfer of emotion from one individual to another. *Pitta* is the state in between the kinetic and the potential, the stage of transition between the two, and any sort of transition can be associated with *pitta*. *Kapha*, potential energy, creates quiet, peaceful, uneventful dreams that the dreamer does not usually bother to remember.

   b) Virility—the capacity and desire for the sex act. *Vata* people have great desire for sex but do not have the endurance to perform intercourse well or frequently. *Pitta* people have moderate virility but are sometimes overcome by lust which, like anger, is a fiery emotion. The *kapha* person has a great capacity for sex but little interest in it because of *kapha's* natural inertia. *Vata* people tend to think excessively about sexual subjects and plan their conquests in detail but so expend their energy thusly that it is not easy to consummate their desires, whereas sex to a *kapha* person is a natural act and is not a subject for any particular attention.

c) Vocal Habits—*Vata* people are talkative, and will talk to anything or anybody just for the love of talking without expecting any particular response. The *pitta* individual talks with ease and usually shows an incisive wit. *Kapha* people tend to be taciturn and speak mainly when spoken to even when they want to express themselves.

d) Memory—this can refer to any type of memory; for example, of anger. A *vata* person is quick to anger but immediately speaks out everything he has on his mind and within a few minutes cannot remember what he was angry about. *Pitta* people are quick to anger, even for imagined slights, and retain their anger indefinitely, allowing it to burn within them. The *kapha* person is normally genial and slow to react but once incited is like an elephant, an implacable foe who never forgets.

The Eight Censured Constitutions

Eight constitutional types are spoken of by Charaka as being "censured" in the sense that, unlike other constitutional types, these are difficult to rectify even with appropriate diet and routine. These eight symptoms are not serious in and of themselves but rather serve as markers or indicators of very fundamental disturbances in the individual's physical and/or mental harmony that will be resistant to control. Amelioration is possible but requires continual attention to healthful practices. The eight are those persons who are:

1. Too tall—and especially disproportionately so
2. Too short—especially disproportionately
3. Too thin—easily falls prey to all diseases
4. Too fat—said to be worse than being too thin, also susceptible to all diseases
5. Too dark in complexion—with reference to the standard for the individual's race and to climate
6. Too pale in skin color—again, according to race and to climate

7. Covered with too much body hair
8. Without any body hair

Summary

The individual *prakruti* cannot be altered without an alteration of the genetic material, and its importance to the individual is so great that it deserves to be determined with great care. Because of the power of the mind, sometimes it is difficult to determine *prakruti* accurately. *Sattva* is the state which is desirable for the mind: clarity without mental chatter or confusion. *Rajas*, aggressiveness or hyperactivity, and *tamas*, inertia and ignorance, are the twin *doshas* of the mind. While the texts do identify *sattva* as the mental counterpart of *pitta* and relate *kapha* to *tamas* and *vata* to *rajas*, these are only innate tendencies. A *pitta* person should be able to increase *sattva* easily but often falls prey to arrogance because of his or her easy success. *Kapha* people must always guard against laziness and *vata* people need to avoid spaciness and scatter-brained attitudes, but a sincere desire to improve can remove these obstacles. The Ayurvedic healer must be very alert to the physical and mental constitutions so that the prescribed therapy fits the individual's capacity to understand and carry it out.

LESSON FOUR

Doshas, Dhatus and Malas

The existence of the body is rooted in the doshas, dhatus and malas only.

The body is defined as "that which decays." What decays is the group of *dhatus*, the constituent tissues that support life. Table Five summarizes the *dhatus*, *upadhatus* and *malas*. Seven tissues have been delineated and each *dhatu* represents more than its name indicates. For example, *majja* means anything that exists within a bone and includes not only the red and yellow bone marrows but also the brain and spinal cord which are encased in bone. *Shukra* means not only semen but also all the nerve impulses and hormones secreted anywhere in the body that affect the production of seminal fluid. Therefore the *dhatus'* functions must be considered as being more important than their mere physical substance.

For example, the function of *rasa* is nourishment. But the Sanskrit word used here is "*prinana*" which gives a sense of joy and love. The body experiences a spasm of pleasure when its "thirst" for nourishment is quenched which is equivalent to the frenzy of delight a man dying of thirst experiences when he locates an oasis in the desert. The lack of this joy is

felt in those who have diseases characterized by indigestion in which the body cannot obtain its libation of *rasa*.

Likewise the function of *rakta* is invigoration, which goes further than the mere transport of oxygen and nutrients to the tissues. The Sanskrit is *jivana*, "making one feel alive." A healthy circulation permits the body, down to the most minute cell, to rely on the blood to nourish it. When this function is interrupted or attenuated, a fear of death is created which begins in the tissues but ends in the mind. *Mamsa* covers the body frame to seal the body from the depredations of the external environment and the feeling it creates in the body is equivalent to the satisfaction and safety one feels when lying underneath thick quilts on a cold winter's night. *Meda* not only lubricates but provides *sneha*, "lavish or extravagant love." *Asthi* is supportive as well as supporting, and the "*purana*" or filling of *majja* removes emptiness of mind as well as of body. *Shukra* and *artava* provide not only for procreation, physical reproduction, but are also in charge of all other forms of creation, artistic and otherwise. Since whatever affects the body affects the mind and vice versa, improper nutrition of these *dhatus* will result in improper emotional nutrition, and vice versa.

For example, someone who lacks a loving life partner or adequate family support may be so mentally distraught that he or she attempts to fill the void with *meda* which does, to a limited extent, produce a physical satisfaction. Unless this is understood and corrected it is quite unlikely that such an obese person will ever lose weight, even if he or she seems consciously to want to do so because subconsciously the body will be holding on tenaciously to the only "*sneha*" it possesses: the fat.

Nutrition of the *Dhatus*

Each *dhatu* acts as food for the *dhatu* beneath it in the table. This does not indicate a merely physical connection. Common sense suggests that blood nourishes muscle but it is difficult to understand how bone tissue can act as food for the brain.

Table 5: The *Dhatus* and *Malas*

DHATU	*UPADHATU*	*FUNCTION*	*MALA*	*DOSHA WITH WHICH ASSOCIATED*
(INGESTED FOOD)		Production of *ahara rasa*	Feces and urine	All three
RASA (CHYLE, PLASMA)	Breast milk and menstrual secretions	Nourishment	*Kapha* (Mucus)	*Kapha*
RAKTA (RED BLOOD CELLS)	Blood vessels, tendons	Invigoration	*Pitta* (Bile)	*Pitta*
MAMSA (MUSCLE TISSUE)	Ligaments, skin	"Plastering" of the skeleton	Ear wax, smegma, snot, navel lint, etc.	*Kapha*
MEDA (FAT)	Omentum	Lubrication	Sweat	*Kapha*
ASTHI (BONE)	Teeth	Support	Body hair, beard, nails	*Vata*
MAJJA (BONE MARROW AND CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM)	Head hair	"Filling" of the bones	Lacrimal secretions	*Kapha*
SHUKRA & ARTAVA (REPRODUCTIVE TISSUES)		Reproduction		*Kapha* (male) *Pitta* (female)

The intention here is that proper formation of the previous *dhatu* is essential for formation of the one beyond it. If a *dhatu* is malnourished, it will be unable to send out signals to the next *dhatu agni* (metabolic pathway) to initiate synthesis of the next *dhatu*.

In a factory producing a product that requires several individual steps for completion, each step acts as a limiting factor for the

succeeding step. If seven steps are required and production ceases to function properly at step four, then step five will not receive proper raw material, since the product at step four is the raw material for step five. The same will be true for steps six and seven. In the body, if one *dhatu agni* fails all the *dhatus* beyond it will suffer.

In any factory, output is determined by the quality of the raw materials and the efficiency of the process. Each process produces products and by-products. The more efficient production is, the more products will be produced and with fewer by-products. If the process is very inefficient, by-products may outnumber products. The body is no different. No matter how good the food you eat, if the body cannot digest it one may as well not be eating. It's not what you eat, it's what you digest (this was a saying of my teacher, Vimalananda). The Ayurvedic texts state, "All diseases arise because of inadequate *agni* (digestive fire)."

In the body, the *dhatus* are the products and the *upadhatus* and the *malas* are the by-products. An *upadhatu* is a tissue that is nourished but which does not nourish any *dhatu* further along the line. They are, as it were, dead-end streets in the traffic of nutrition. *Malas* are wastes that must be continually thrown out of the body but perform service to the body in the interim between their creation and their excretion.

Rasa Dhatu

Like the *doshas*, the *dhatus* are more than merely physical. However, they are closely associated with physical structures. *Rasa dhatu* is closely associated with the substance known as chyle, the milky fluid that is present in the lymphatic system after digestion of a meal. The qualities of chyle are the same as the attributes of *kapha*: sticky, heavy, cold, opaque, sweet, unctuous. *Ahara rasa*, the nutrient material absorbed into the digestive tract, is acted upon by *rasa dhatu agni* and is converted into *rasa dhatu* (the product) and *kapha* (the by-product). This *kapha* is the physical form of *kapha*: the body's mucus. The amount of mucus formed depends on the level of *kapha dosha* in the body at the time of digestion. The *doshas* are subtle forces

circulating in the body awaiting opportunities to descend into the physical world. If there is excess *kapha dosha* in the body at the time of digestion, that *kapha* will interfere with the workings of *rasa dhatu agni* and will reduce the production of *rasa dhatu* and increase the production of mucus.

Therefore it is not the milk you drink that creates mucus within you; it is the excess *kapha dosha* in your body that converts the milk into mucus when you drink it. The milk should not be falsely accused when the *kapha* is at fault.

The *upadhatus* of *rasa* are breast milk and menstrual fluid. This demonstrates the depth of the *rishis'* knowledge. In a healthy female, as long as she nurses a child, usually there is no menstrual flow; all the nutrients are shunted into the milk. If the *rasa dhatu agni*, or digestive fire, is weak then neither the milk nor the menses will be properly produced, resulting on the one hand in insufficient milk or in milk which will cause congestion in the baby and on the other hand in an alteration in the composition of the menstrual secretion.

Rakta Dhatu

The qualities of both blood and bile are the same as the qualities of *pitta*: greasy, intense, hot, malodorous, fluid and liquid. Excess *pitta* in the body will retard the production of new red blood cells and will increase the breakdown of red cells into bile pigments. As a result *mamsa* will suffer. *Kapha* people are said to be prone to anemia because they tend to produce excess mucus and insufficient *rasa* to be acted on by the *rakta dhatu agni* for conversion into *rakta*. *Pitta* people have plenty of blood but its quality is poor because of the excessive production of bile.

Other *Dhatus*

Likewise each *dhatu* in sequence will be properly formed only if these criteria are met:

- The previous *dhatu* must be produced in adequate quality and quantity
- The appropriate *dhatu agni* must be strong.

Nutrition of the *dhatus* may be tested by examination of the *dhatus* directly, by examination of the *upadhatus* or by examination of the *malas*. For example, diseases of the teeth indicate improper formation of *asthi*. *Majja* may be examined by examination of the hair, a fact that is now recognized by proponents of hair analysis. Excessive production of "space wastes" such as ear wax, snot, navel lint, smegma (accumulations under the male foreskin) and the like, which fill the spaces in the external body, indicate disturbances in the formation of *mamsa*. Profuse sweating is characteristic of the obese. Examination of the nails can suggest the state of the bones.

Essential versus Nonessential

Fire is the fulcrum of the balance that weighs essence and dross. The digestive fire determines what portion of the digested food is converted into chyle and what portion will be excreted as urine and feces. A strong digestive fire, or *agni*, will maximize production of chyle. Weak *agni* will either permit most of the nutrients to be expelled without absorption or will cause the nutrient to be absorbed after only partial digestion, producing a substance called *ama* that clogs the body and promotes disease.

Agni is the essential form of the universal principle of heat. *Pitta* is the non-essential or waste product form. Likewise *ojas* is the essential form and *kapha* the non-essential form of Water in the body, and *prana* and *vata* are the essential and non-essential forms of Air respectively. When we say that *kapha* provides strength to the body we mean that the body will be strong only if there is just sufficient *kapha* to perform its allotted tasks. An excess or deficiency of *kapha* will rob the body of strength. Excess *pitta* will decrease digestive power, not increase it, and excess or insufficiency of *vata* will interfere with all bodily motions.

Even though *dhatus* are essential to the body, they can be harmful in excess. Excess production of *rasa* will produce *kapha*-like symptoms, even if *rakta dhatu agni* is normal, since there will be too much raw material for the *dhatu agni* to process. *Rasa* causes the body to exult in the correct quantity; too much will "cloy by its sweetness and tire by its sameness" and create the polar opposite of exultation in the mind. Likewise for the other *dhatus*. Table Six on page 4-35 summarizes the effects of excess and deficiency of the *dhatus*.

***Srotamsi*: The Body's Spatial Systems**

Digestion of raw materials and production of products and by-products require a factory building (the body) and also require reaction vessels which are housed in the factory building and are the structures in which the reactions occur. In the body, these structures are the various organs involved in assimilation and excretion.

According to Ayurveda, *kapha* and *pitta* are lame. They cannot move about in the body on their own but rather are carried by *vata*. Whenever they are increased, *vata* moves them about just as the wind moves clouds about in the sky. When conditions are right in the body, rain occurs in the form of disease. Whenever toxins due to improper digestion are produced or when there is an increase in the body's wastes, *vata* must inevitably be disturbed. Excess wastes may obstruct the flow of *vata* or insufficient *dhatus* may be incapable of restraining *vata* and will permit it to flow excessively. Either way the flow will be disturbed.

The body is divided into *srotamsi* (the singular form is *srotas*) which are the channels in which *vata* flows and thanks to which assimilation, digestion and excretion can occur. These *srotamsi* number fourteen in the male and sixteen in the female. They are grouped according to function:

1. *Srotamsi* concerned with intake of nutrients:
    a) *Pranavahasrotas*—concerned with nutrition of *prana*; includes lungs, bronchi, trachea, mouth
    b) *Annavahasrotas* (also known as the *mahasrotas*)—concerned with digestion of solid food; includes the whole alimentary canal from mouth to anus
    c) *Ambuvahasrotas*—concerned with water metabolism; includes palate and pancreas
2. *Srotamsi* concerned with excretion of wastes:

a) *Purishavahasrotas*—excretes feces; includes terminal portion of colon including sigmoid process, rectum and anus
b) *Mutravahasrotas*—excretes urine; includes bladder, ureters and urethra
c) *Svedavahasrotas*—excretes sweat; includes sweat glands in the skin.

3. *Srotamsi* concerned with nutrition of *dhatus*:
    a) Rasavahasrotas
    b) Raktavahasrotas
    c) Mamsavahasrotas
    d) Medovahasrotas
    e) Asthivahasrotas
    f) Majjavahasrotas
    g) Shukravahasrotas

In women the two additional channels are the *stanyavahasrotas*, which is the channel for breast milk, and the *rajavahasrotas*, the channel through which the menstrual fluid is excreted. The last *srotas* is the *manovahasrotas* which covers the entire body and through which the mind moves.

Disturbances to Proper Flow

Four disturbances to flow in these channels are possible:

- Excessive flow
- Insufficient flow
- Obstruction
- Deviation of the flow from the channel

For example, consider disturbances to the flow of the *mahasrotas* or alimentary canal:

- Excessive flow occurs in diarrhea
- Decreased flow is characteristic of constipation
- Obstruction may be due to tumor or such conditions as volvulus and intussusception
- Deviation from the channel takes place when there is a perforation, from an injury or a neglected ulcer, which permits the contents to escape into the surrounding tissues.

Such disturbances may occur in any part of the system and in all cases are due to misdirected flow of *vata*. Excessive and decreased flows are due to *vata* moving in the right direction with the wrong velocity. Obstruction either will make the *vata* move in the opposite direction as in 3) or in an improper direction as in 4) above.

Sukha, the Sanskrit word for happiness and health, means literally "good space." When all the bodily *srotamsi* are in working order, the body is healthy and happy. *Dukha* means both unhappiness and ill health and literally indicates "bad space." Disturbance in the normal flow of nutrients and wastes causes disease and misery. Since life is merely a flow from the external to the internal and back again, health is only possible when the channels are clean and free-flowing.

Table 6: Excess and Deficiency of Dhatus

DHATU	*SIGNS OF INCREASE*	*SIGNS OF DECREASE*
RASA	Obstructed bodily channels, nausea, watering of the mouth, loss of appetite	Dryness of body, fatigue, feeling of emptiness, inability to endure noise
RAKTA	Redness of eyes and body, jaundice, skin disease	Dry skin, collapse of vessels, loss of vigor
MAMSA	Bodily heaviness, swelling of glands	Looseness of joints, emaciation, fatigue
MEDA	Obesity, pendulousness of breasts, buttocks and abdomen	dry, rough, lean body; desire for fatty foods
ASTHI	Extra teeth, excessive calcification in tissues	Weak joints, pain in bones, dryness of teeth, nails or hair
MAJJA	Heaviness of joints, enlarged joints	Weak bones, dizziness, darkness before the eyes (blackout)
SHUKRA & ARTAVA	Excessive lust	Pain in reproductive organs, aversion to sex, loss of virility, darkness around the eyes

The Thirteen Permissible Bodily Urges

Vata is in charge of all bodily movements, voluntary and involuntary. There are thirteen involuntary urges that should never be repressed lest *vata* be caused to move in an abnormal direction and so contribute to disturbance of a *srotas* and disease. Never to be restrained are the urges to: urinate, defecate, fart, vomit, sneeze, belch, yawn, ejaculate semen when aroused, eat when hungry, drink when thirsty, sleep when tired, pant when exhausted and cry when miserable.

The Seven *Kalas*

Seven of the *srotamsi* are involved with nutrition of the *dhatus*. These *srotamsi* are more functional than physical in the sense that they represent metabolic pathways that determine *dhatu* nutrition. One final concept is required to complete our outline of *dhatu nutrition*: the *kala*. A *kala* is a sort of membrane that acts as the substrate for the *dhatu agni*. Just as light passing through a prism is white when it goes in and is fragmented into colors as it emerges, nutrient material undergoes transformation as it passes through the *kalas*. There are seven *kalas*:

- *Shleshmadharakala* - for *rasa*
- *Pittadharakala* - for *rakta*
- *Mamsadharakala* - for *mamsa*
- *Medadharakala* - for *meda*
- *Purishadharakala* - for *asthi*
- *Majjadharakala* - for *majja*
- *Shukradharakala* - for *shukra*

Note that the *kala* for *rasa* is named the *shleshmadharakala*. *Shleshma* is another name for *kapha* and this indicates that the *kala* is a sort of osmotic-like membrane; whatever passes across it becomes *rasa* and whatever remains behind becomes *kapha*. Likewise for the *pittadharakala* and *rakta*.

For *asthi*, the kala is connected with *purisha*, a name for feces. The *purishadharakala* can be provisionally identified with the lining

of the colon. The bones are the main seat of *vata* in the body. *Prana*, the essential form of Air, is nourished in two ways: instantaneously through respiration and, after some delay, through the colon. The colon extracts the *prana* from the food and absorbs it into the body. If this process is inefficient, some of the *prana* will be converted into its waste product form, *vata*. This will accumulate in the bones and joints and, when disturbed, will cause such diseases as arthritis.

Subtle Digestion

Anything normally health-giving when taken into the body will act as a poison if improperly digested and, conversely, anything poisonous is health-giving to the body if it can be digested. Besides food, this rule holds true for every action and substance we imbibe in our lives: exercise, light, emotion. Indulgence of the sense organs with their objects acts as food for the mind. All diseases begin in the mind — even indigestion occurs because of mental perversity leading to dietary indiscretion — so mental indigestion is the first cause of disease.

Mental indigestion can be diagnosed by the presence of emotion when an individual is confronted with a stressful situation. For example, when there has been a burglary in the house, the logical response is to inform the authorities and to attempt to prevent further loss. Ideally, emotion has no place in such a response. But if the mind cannot digest this event — "How could something like this happen to me?" — emotion will be produced and will overwhelm the faculty of mental discrimination.

Some people will react with fear — say, of further burglaries. This is typical of the *vata* individual. Anger at the burglars or the neighbors or one's self is typical of *pitta*. And the *kapha* response typically is to search for new and better methods of secreting away one's wealth. These responses are generalized, however. Normally a *pitta* person does respond to stress with anger, but not always. Also, anger is not limited to *pitta* people; all humans become angry on occasion.

However, the effect of anger on the body is always detrimental to *pitta*, fear always disturbs *vata*, and greed always imbalances *kapha*; irrespective of the individual's *prakruti*. The power of the mind predominates over the response of the body.

Ama and *Ojas*

Ama is the result of indigestion. It is a substance that possesses all the qualities of mucus and, in addition, is toxic. Its toxicity is due to the fact that it is improperly digested. When the *agni* in the *mahasrotas* is unable to efficiently convert ingested food into *ahara rasa*, the result is *ama*. This *ama* then obstructs the *mahasrotas* and results in indigestion. If this indigestion is neglected, the *ama* will be absorbed into the body and will obstruct all *srotamsi* into which it can gain access.

Ojas is the ultimate product of digestion and acts as a receptacle for the subtle fire (*agni* or *tejas*) in the body. All substances and actions that increase *rasa* will increase *ojas* — as long as the digestion is strong. The causes of lack of *ojas* are the same as those of increased *vata*: dry, stale food, excessive windbathing and sunbathing, worry, fear, sorrow, fasting from sleep, old age, and excessive loss of blood, semen or feces, among others.

Any food ingested will result in *ojas* if the body is healthy and in *ama* if the body is diseased. The process of nutrition may be interrupted between any two *dhatus* and prevent production of adequate *ojas*. The sicker and more toxic the individual, the more the production of *ama*.

Season, Field, Seed and Water

Anything that grows requires four inputs:

- A growing season—characterized by the right amount of sun, wind and warmth
- A well-cultivated field

- Good seed
- Water

Ayurveda has used this analogy in many contexts. In the case of conception, for example, the season is the moment of ovulation and the days surrounding it; the field is the endometrium in the womb; the seed is the sperm and ovum; and the water is the blood that provides nourishment to the embryo.

Good health also grows. The criteria for good health in a human being are:

- Consumption of food at the proper time of day and the selection of food articles according to the seasons of the year to stabilize the levels of the *doshas*.
- A healthy body with well-nourished *dhatus* and balanced *doshas* that can receive the food, digest it easily without delay and excrete *malas* efficiently.
- Good quality food in quantity appropriate for the individual's age, *prakruti* and activities.
- Adequate *ojas*, the subtle form of Water, to protect *tejas* and *prana* and to promote luster and mental acuity.

Summary

Because the body continuously decays, it must be continuously nourished. Adequate nutrition involves continuous, efficient production of *dhatus* and *upadhatus* and continuous efficient elimination of *malas*. Strong *agni* is the chief cause of good digestion. Nutrition takes place thanks to the *srotamsi* or bodily spatial systems and the seven *kalas* or functional metabolic membranes. Obstruction to the *srotamsi* is caused by occlusion of the *kalas* by *ama*. Disturbance to the flow can also occur by restraint of natural urges. When the flow in the *srotamsi* is disturbed, *vata* becomes disturbed. *Vata* then carries *pitta* and *kapha* throughout the body until an area of weakness is located; they lodge in this location and a disease is created. If no weakness is located, they continue to circulate. *Ojas* is the ultimate product of good digestion; *ama* is produced whenever *agni* becomes weak.

Questions For The Ayurvedic Home Study Course

Lessons 1 - 4

Please answer each question as completely as possible.

1) What is the definition of health? What is medicine? How does the Ayurvedic definition of medicine differ from that of modern medicine?

2) What is a *sutra*? Why are they important to the study of Ayurveda? Give three examples of *sutras* and explain, with examples, their usefulness in the study of Ayurveda.

3) Why are the *doshas* called *dhatus*? What is the principle difference between the three *doshas* and the seven *dhatus*? To which *dosha* is each *dhatu* similar and how is it similar?

4) List the five types of *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*. Suggest which form of which *dosha* you think might be affected in the following diseases: arthritis, skin rashes, common cold.

5) Why is *prakruti* important? What are the chief causes for the individual *prakruti*?

6) What are the Eight Censured Constitutions? Why do you think they are undesirable? Which *doshas* are responsible for each?

7) What is an *upadhatu* and how does it differ from a *dhatu*? List the *upadhatus*.

8) What is a *srotas*? Which *srotamsi* do you think would be disturbed in the following diseases: asthma, diabetes, ulcerative colitis?

9) Which are the urges that are not to be restrained? Restraint of the urges to sneeze, to ejaculate and to eat would probably disturb which forms of *vata*?

10) What is the difference between *ama* and *ojas*? Explain what would happen to *rakta* if the digestive tract is full of *ama*.

Please complete your answers and, if you have access to e-mail, send them as an attachment to dseeger@ayurveda.com. If you do not have e-mail, please return completed answers to:

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Lessons and Lectures on Ayurveda

Part Two

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Lesson Five

Pathology

Always control the doshas at the stage of accumulation.

The meaning of the above *sutra* is this: never wait until a disease has manifested to treat it. Always redress any *doshic* imbalance as soon as it occurs. In order to be able to spot such *doshic* imbalances, it is essential to study not only diagnosis but also pathology, the steps involved in the development of a disease condition.

In Lesson Four you were introduced to the concept of season, field, seed and water. In the case of disease production these ingredients are also necessary:

- Season—the texts say, "Diseases are born at the junctions of the seasons." Four aspects of time as season are most significant: time of day, season of year, age and stage of digestion.
- Field—besides the characteristics of the external climate—humid regions cause *kapha* increase, arid regions favor *vata* increase, torrid regions increase *pitta*—the internal environment acts as the field in which the seeds of disease are sown. When the *dhatus* are

weak and ill-formed, conditions are ripe for disease development.

- Seed—bacteria, viruses and cancer cells can all act as seeds for disease, but none of these seeds grow unless *ama* is present. Therefore *ama* is the chief seed of ill health.
- Water—the *doshas* water the seed of *ama* and make it sprout. The wind of *vata* blows the clouds of *pitta* and *kapha* through the body until they locate a fertile field (*dhatu* imbalance) sown with seed (*ama*) and there the *doshas* rain onto the field and a crop of disease flourishes.

Ojas and *Ama*

The *dhatus* are the supporters of the body. They decay continuously and must be continuously nourished. *Ama* and *ojas* differ from the *dhatus* in that they can propagate themselves. While the *dhatus* must wait patiently to be fed, *ama* and *ojas* create conditions in the body that allow them to feed on themselves and to expand. Thus *ama* is so dangerous and *ojas* is so desirable.

Diseases Begin at the Junction of the Seasons

Table One reviews the relationship between time and the *doshas*. Time is not static but continuously flowing, a function of *vata*. Cosmically nothing stands still. The entire universe is an enormous being, rhythmically expanding and contracting. Life is continual expansion and contraction. In the body, the *srotamsi* dilate and constrict, be these *srotamsi* blood vessels, lymph vessels, bronchioles, ducts or glands. *Pitta*, or heat, produces dilation and *kapha*, cold, produces constriction. *Vata* is the force that causes the affected structures to dilate or constrict according to the stimulus received, since *pitta* and *kapha* are lame and cannot act on their own.

Table 7: *Doshas* and Time Cycles

TIME	*VATA*	*PITTA*	*KAPHA*
DAWN	Predominant	Neutral	Accumulating
MORNING	Decreasing	Accumulating	Predominant
MIDDAY	Neutral	Predominant	Decreasing
AFTERNOON	Accumulating	Decreasing	Neutral
DUSK	Predominant	Neutral	Accumulating
EARLY EVENING	Decreasing	Accumulating	Predominant
MIDNIGHT	Neutral	Predominant	Decreasing
PRE-DAWN	Accumulating	Decreasing	Neutral
DAWN	Predominant	Neutral	Accumulating
SEASON OF YEAR			
SPRING	Neutral	Accumulating	Predominant
SUMMER	Accumulating	Predominant	Decreasing
AUTUMN	Predominant	Decreasing	Neutral
WINTER	Decreasing	Neutral	Accumulating
AGE			
YOUTH	Neutral	Accumulating	Predominant
ADULTHOOD	Accumulating	Predominant	Decreasing
OLD AGE	Predominant	Decreasing	Neutral
DIGESTION			
IMMEDIATELY AFTER EATING	Neutral	Accumulating	Predominant
AFTER THE STOMACH EMPTIES	Accumulating	Predominant	Decreasing
AS THE FOOD MOVES ALONG THE SMALL INTESTINE, BEING ABSORBED	Predominant	Decreasing	Neutral

Each time a *srotas* that is contracted must dilate or a *srotas* that is dilated must contract, adaptation in the organism is required to maintain balance or homeostasis. When this balance is lost, the *doshas* become disturbed and disease results. Each time the organism must adapt it is under stress. Time cycles are regular, recurrent stresses that cannot be avoided and thus must be thoroughly understood so that their influence on the organism can be minimized.

Time of Day

Night is cooler than day. Night can be correlated with a relative excess of *kapha* and day with a relative excess of *pitta*. The overall effect of night is to accumulate *kapha* in the body and mind. When day breaks, the world begins to heat up and the *kapha* that accumulated begins to flow. The *srotamsi* that contracted during the night now dilate. Since the organism always tries to remain in equilibrium with the outside world, all the *kapha* inside tries to flow outside to reduce the internal level to that of the outside. This is not mucus but rather the subtle *dosha kapha* that is flowing out. If there is a great excess of *kapha* or obstructions in the channels in which it flows, the *kapha* will flood out of its *srotamsi* into the *dhatus* and will produce the upper respiratory congestion so often noticed upon rising.

As the day grows warmer, *pitta* accumulates and reaches its maximum at midday. Just as the sun dries the earth by evaporation of water from its surface, the sun dries the body and mind by removal of *kapha* from them. This drying effect, coupled with the growing coolness of the earth as the sun sinks toward the horizon, increases the cool and dry attributes of *vata* and causes it to predominate in the organism.

Just as *vata* and *kapha* are closely connected with the body's joints, they are also associated with the two "joints" linking day and night: sunrise and sunset. At sunset the influence of the moon causes *kapha* to begin to flow back into the body and mind. Midnight is governed by *pitta* because the sun is at its maximum height over the opposite side of the earth from us at midnight. Like the moon, the sun

causes a tidal effect in the body, specifically a high tide of heat during the middle of both day and night. Evidence of this is the burning stomach pain, or even the salivation, a patient of peptic ulcer will wake with around midnight. As the night grows colder toward dawn, *vata* increases until the sun rises and the cycle begins again.

Daybreak and dusk are the two joints in this process, the two periods during which it is easiest for the *doshas* to be disturbed, because of the reversal of flow that occurs at those moments. Figures Five and Six offer a visual portrayal of this relationship.

Figure Seven correlates the hours of the day with the *doshas* and the organs, according to the system of Oriental Medicine. Yin and *kapha* are not different from one another; yang and *pitta* also tally. Ki, or chi, is identical with *prana* on the subtle level and with *vata* at the physical level. This cycle of predominating *doshas* and organs indicates the predominance of various energies during the day, as controlled by the cosmic energies.

Seasons of the Year

As with the day, the year is a cycle of expansion and contraction controlled by the sun. From the winter solstice to the summer solstice is the period known as *adana* during which the sun sucks energy away from the earth by evaporating its moisture. *Visarga*, the period from the summer solstice to the winter solstice, represents release of energy from the sun to the earth. The two equinoctial points occur when the sun is neither drawing energy from nor releasing energy to the earth. *Adana* weakens all living beings; *visarga* strengthens them. Therefore, all other things being equal, the healthiest period of the year (astronomically) is November through January and the least healthy period is May through July. February through May and August through October are intermediate.

This analysis must be coupled with the movements of the *doshas*. Winter is the night of the year during which *kapha* accumulates; spring represents daybreak when *kapha* begins to flow out of the body;

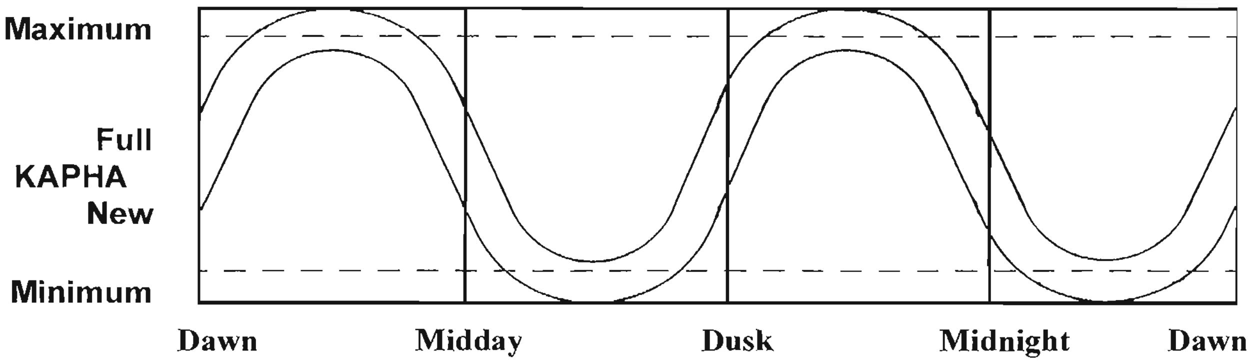


Figure 5

During the night, *kapha* accumulates in the organism due to night's inherent qualities of darkness and coldness. When day comes, *kapha* begins to flow out of the body. If anything impedes this flow, congestion will result. The heat of the sun reduces *kapha*. After the sun sets, the cold darkness of the night causes *kapha* to accumulate in the body again. Here again, obstruction will cause congestion because the natural flow will be impeded. The increase and decrease of *kapha* is regulated by the moon and is usually greatest overall at the time of the full moon and less at the new moon.

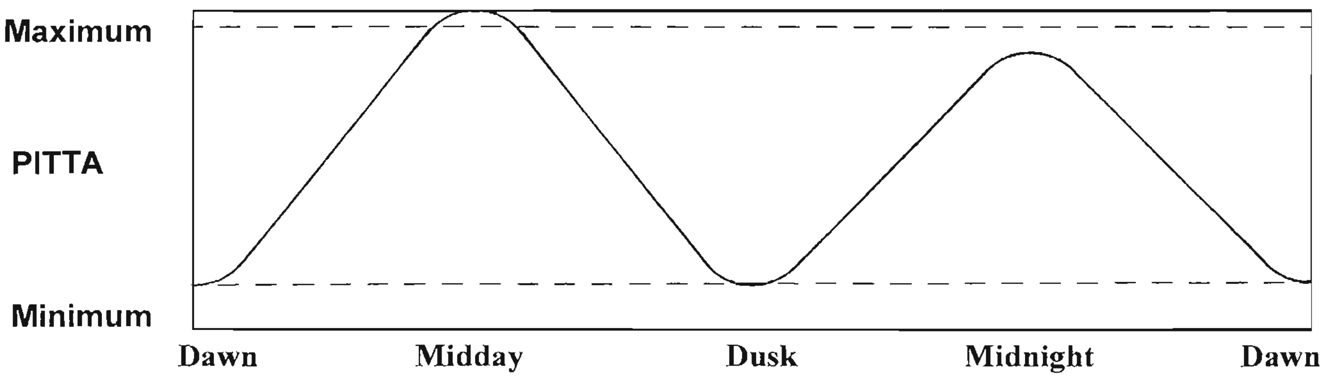
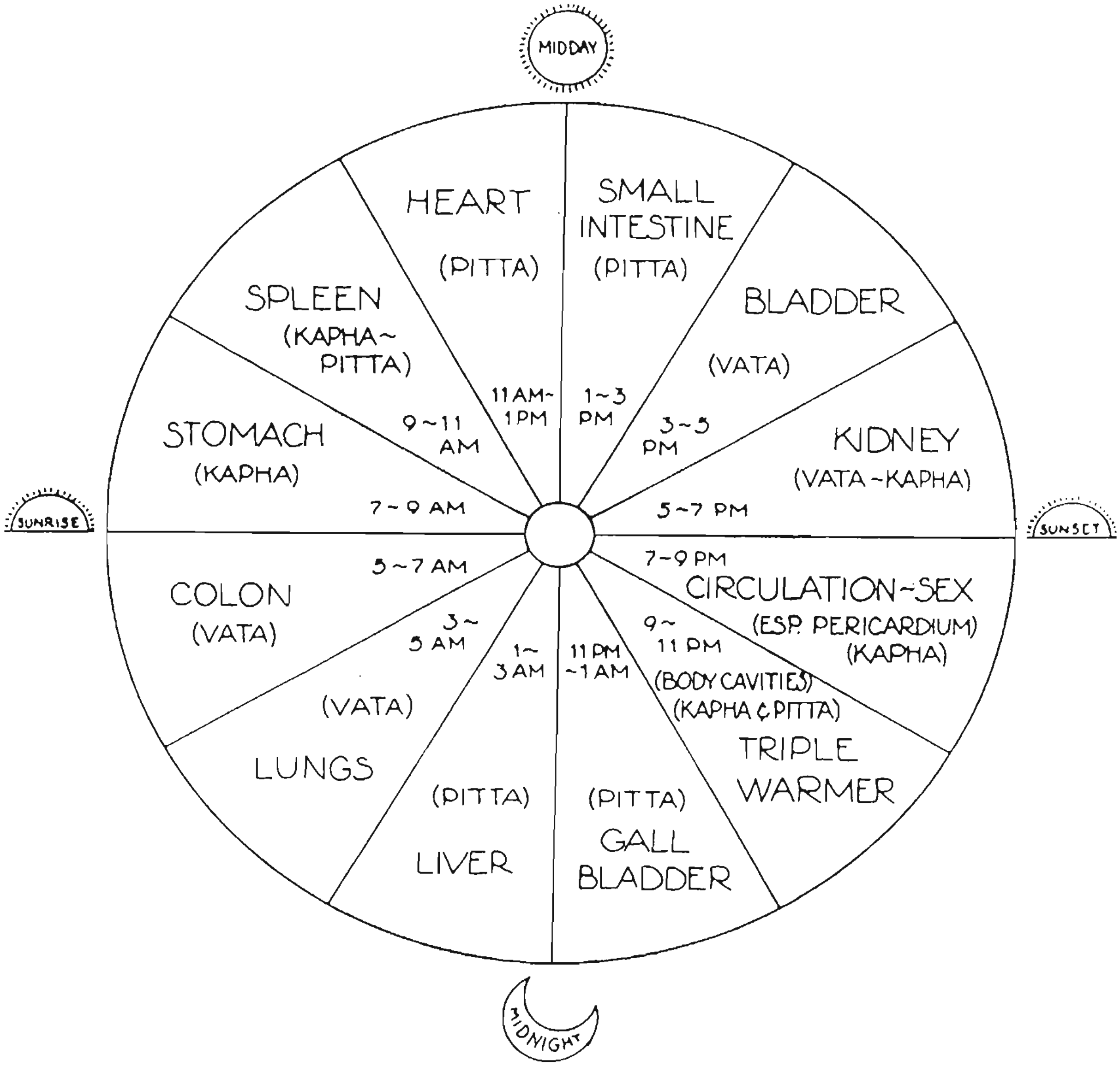


Figure 6

The night peak of *pitta* is slightly less than the day peak because the influence of the moon during the night weakens *pitta* and the sun's influence strengthens *pitta* during the day.

THE FORCE OF MOVEMENT OF *KAPHA* AND *PITTA* - FIGURES 5 & 6



(In an ideal situation, when sunrise and sunset are at 7 AM and 7 PM respectively.)

THE ORGANS AND THE *DOSHAS* - FIGURE 7

autumn is the period during which *kapha* begins to flow back into the body, just as it does at sunset.

During summer the sun is hottest and the body allows as much of its *agni* to flow out as possible to prevent overheating. This explains why appetites are least in hot weather. During the winter, *agni* is driven inside and appetite and digestion capacities improve. At all of these seasonal changes the chances for *dosha* disturbance increase.

Age

The first one-third of one's life is characterized by growth, or anabolism. Nutrients go in and wastes come out but the net result is an increase in the size of both mind and body, an inflowing of *kapha*. Adulthood marks a balance between input and output, governed by *pitta*. *Kapha* begins to flow out during the last third of life and the dryness thus created increases *vata*.

Stages of Digestion

Consumption of food means intake of the Earth and Water elements into the body, the two elements that join together to form *kapha*. The entire digestive process is governed by *pitta*, though the first part is under the influence of *kapha* and the last part is under the influence of *vata*. Excretion of wastes reduces the Earth and Water in the system, thereby increasing the Ether and Air and thus increasing *vata*.

The Six Progressive Stages of Disease

Having considered Season, Field and Seed, the influence of *doshas* as the Watering of a disease remains. There are six stages of disease production according to *doshic* involvement:

- Accumulation
- Exacerbation
- Overflow
- Location

- Manifestation
- Specialization

1. Accumulation

Because of the intake of causative factors (like increases like), the *doshas* begin to accumulate in their respective locales: *kapha* in the stomach, *pitta* in the small intestine and *vata* in the colon. This accumulation results in certain symptoms that are characteristic for each *dosha*.

Kapha: listlessness, heaviness of the limbs, pallor, bloating, loss of appetite and desire for light, bitter or astringent food.
Pitta: burning sensations, increased body heat, bitter taste in the mouth, acidity in the stomach, increased desire for cold things and increased anger.
Vata: weakness and dryness of the body, desire for warmth and hot articles, flatulence and/or constipation, disturbed sleep and increased fear.

Accumulation is the ideal stage to begin therapeutics because the *doshas* may be removed easily before they leave their prime locations and colonize some distant area of the body. It is for this reason that seasonal purifications are mandatory in Ayurveda. Since the effects of time cannot be avoided but merely nullified, seasonal purification eliminates the accumulation of *doshas* that automatically occurs at the joints of the seasons.

2. Exacerbation

During this second stage, the *doshas* continue to increase in their own locations and begin to cause pressure on them. The symptoms at this stage include:

Kapha: further reduction in appetite, weak digestion, nausea and excessive sleep.
Pitta: heartburn, belching with an acid taste, burning pain in the abdomen (ill-defined), loss of body strength and diminished sleep.
Vata: giddiness, increased constipation, pain or cramping in the abdomen, accumulation of gas in the colon with increased peristalsis and borborygmi (gurglings).

It is still relatively easy to treat the disturbance at this stage, though attention will need to be placed on strengthening the organs under pressure after the increased *doshas* are removed from the body.

3. Overflow

Now the *doshas* break free of the restrictions of their homes and begin to circulate in the body like thugs searching for someone to bully. Symptoms at this stage include:

Kapha: lack of taste in the mouth, increased salivation, nausea and vomiting.
Pitta: diarrhea—especially with anal burning after excretion, pain during digestion of food, yellowness of feces and urine and a generalized increase in body heat.
Vata: colicky pain in the colon, painful defecation with liberation of copious quantities of gas, body weakness and impairment of the motor and sensory nerves.

Doshas may move upward, downward or horizontally in the body. For example, should *vata* move upward rapidly it causes giddiness or vomiting; should it move downward too rapidly diarrhea may result. Horizontal movement of disturbed *vata* may affect peristalsis.

All the body's tissues and organs have been classified into three *margas*, or pathways, for the *doshas* to flow in. The idea is that once the affected *dosha* enters the pathway it generally continues to travel along that pathway affecting all the other structures along it. These *margas* are:

- The *abhyantara* or *koshta marga* (the Internal or Gastrointestinal Pathway) includes the entire *mahasrotas* (alimentary canal) and *rasa*.
- The *bahya marga* (the External Pathway) includes all the other *dhatus* besides *rasa*.
- The *madhyama* or *marma marga* (the Middle or Vital Pathway) encompasses some of the crucial areas of the body including certain essential organs and major vessels and nerves that cause extreme difficulty to the individual when injured.

4. Location

When the *doshas* are able to locate a weakness or disharmony in the *dhatus* or the *malas*, they accumulate there and begin to torment that region. This is the fourth stage, the stage in which prodromal symptoms begin. If the physician knows the disease's prodromal symptoms, treatment is made easier. By stopping the disease process at this stage, the body, which has not been thoroughly devitalized yet, can heal itself more rapidly and thoroughly with less danger of side effects. Prodromal symptoms differ for each disease. Some of them are:

Tuberculosis: evening rise of fever with burning of the hands and feet.
Diabetes: increased frequency of urination, especially at night.
Fever: a changing desire for heat—hot food, warm environment—followed by a desire for cold—food articles and environment.
Diarrhea: constipation.

5. Manifestation

In this fifth stage, the group of symptoms characteristic of the disease manifests itself and diagnosis is no longer in doubt.

6. Specialization

Most diseases have different varieties according to the predominant *dosha* involved. For example, *kapha* heart disease resembles congestive cardiac failure because of the great increase in fluid in the circulatory system (Water element) which exhausts the pumping capacity of the heart. *Pitta* heart disease is characterized by inflammation, as in endocarditis or pericarditis. *Vata* heart disease involves conductive disorders, such as bundle branch block and in bradycardia or tachycardia, where the heart's velocity is decreased or increased, respectively.

Similarly, *kapha* edema pits with applied pressure. A thumb pressed onto a bodily swelling leaves an imprint when the thumb is lifted, if *kapha* is the main dosha. If there is no imprint and the flesh

springs back to its swollen state immediately, *vata* predominates. A patient with *pitta* edema will not allow you to press it since the area will be extremely tender.

Remember that any disturbance of the *dhatus* or *malas* is always caused by the *doshas* that have taken up residence in the *dhatu* or *mala*. The Ayurvedic analogy is to a hot iron ball. If you burn yourself on the ball, it is not the ball that burned you but rather the heat contained within the ball that did the damage.

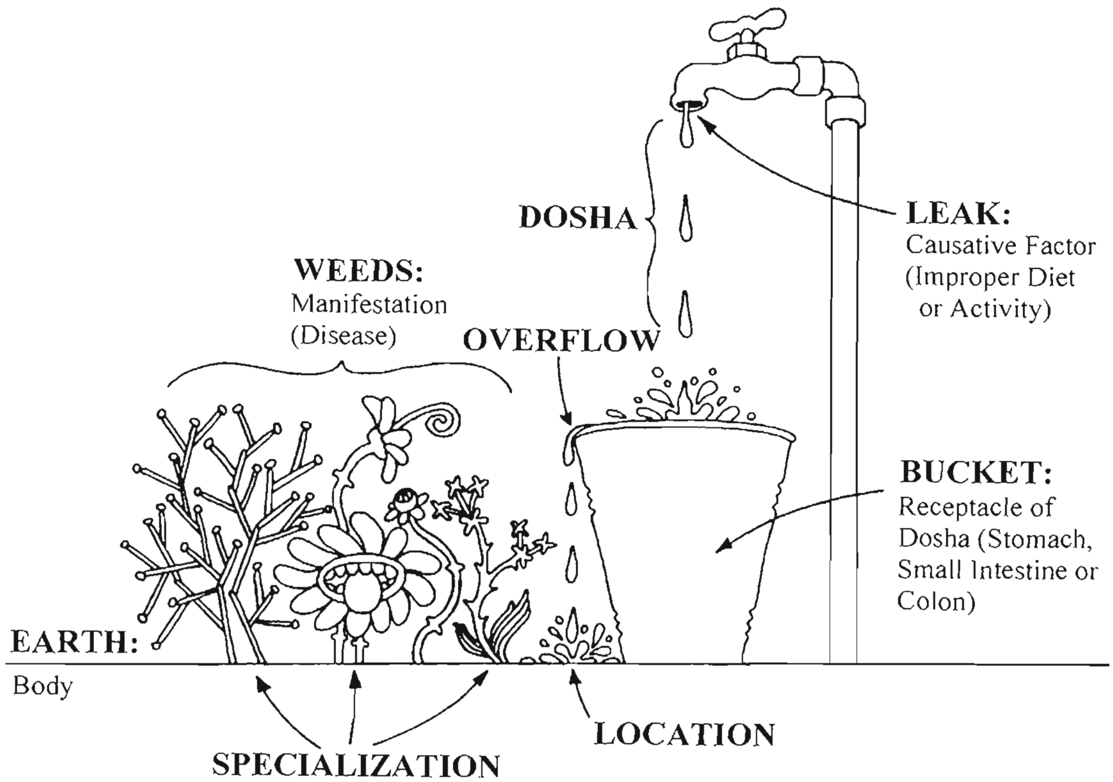
Figure Eight illustrates the six progressive stages in the development of disease. Prevention of disease involves attention to season, protection of the field, destruction of the seed and removal of the water; that is to say, living according to the rules for the time cycles, strengthening the *dhatus* and eliminating all *malas* regularly, extirpation of *ama* and expulsion of *doshas* from the body as soon as they reach the stage of accumulation.

The Seven Principle Causes of Indigestion

Indigestion is the chief cause of disease, leading as it does to *ama*. The causes of indigestion include:

- Excessive consumption of water or other cold substances, or overuse of air conditioning
- Forbidden food combination
- Restraint of natural urges
- Sleep disturbances
- Irregularity in food habits
- Excessive indulgence in sex
- Mental factors

Any overconsumption of liquid will dull *agni*, just as boiling water poured onto a fire will put it out as effectively as will cold water. Forbidden food combinations will be detailed in the lesson on food.



THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISEASE - FIGURE 8

Mental factors are three:

- Time
- Misuse of the sense organs
- Perversity

Time indicates both failure to perform appropriate seasonal purifications and the performance of actions at improper times; sins both of omission and commission. Misuse of the sense organs refers to excessive, insufficient and perverted use of both the five senses and the five motor organs—voice, hands, feet, genitals and anus.

Both time and misuse of the senses, however, presuppose willfulness on the part of the individual, which is perversity, or to be more literal in translation, "obstruction of wisdom" (*prajnaparadha*). Willfulness, or perversity, is therefore the one true cause of disease and is due to weak mental digestion, that is: diminished discrimination between courses of action beneficial and detrimental to the body.

To illustrate, there are four causative factors in consumption, a disease syndrome that includes but is not limited to tuberculosis. They are:

- Foolhardiness—such as trying to show off by lifting a heavy weight
- Obstruction or suppression of natural urges
- Depletion of reproductive fluid because of excessive sexual activity
- Excessive production of *kapha* because of inattention to the rules of diet

All these factors involve a willful mind inducing the body to perform something it should not do. Aspects of willfulness include:

- Inability to determine what is good or bad for one's self because of an affinity with a certain subject. For example, individuals with *kapha prakruti* or *kapha* accumulation may be attracted to ice cream.

- Inability to have proper knowledge of a substance's appropriateness or inappropriateness. For example, eating a food to which one may be allergic.
- Attachment of the mind to *rajas* or *tamas*, resulting in loss of memory, as when one forgets a past hangover and goes out to party again.

The *Antahkarana* or Internal Instrument

The *antahkarana* or internal instrument comprises four "organs": *manas*—the thinking mind, *chitta*—the consciousness, *buddhi*—the faculty of discrimination, and *ahamkara*—the ego. When any new sensation is transmitted to the mind through the sense organs, three operations occur:

- The memory is searched to locate previous experiences with like attribute for comparison.
- The new experience is compared with previous experiences and a conclusion is drawn regarding its desirability.
- The mind determines either to seek out the experience and repeat it because it is pleasurable or to attempt to avoid it because it is unpleasant.

Memory is the function of the mind, which is under the control of *vata*. Actually the entire mental instrument is easily affected by *vata* since both mind and *vata* share several attributes (subtle, mobile, etc.), but the various operations are influenced by all three *doshas*. Because memory involves the storage, classification, transport and retrieval of specific memories, it is under the direct control of *vata*, whose job in both body and mind is to move things around. It is thus that *vata prakruti* people have poor memories.

Pitta controls discrimination. Discrimination is merely a form of digestion, a method of distinguishing between the essential and the non-essential. Determination, the ability to select a course of action and stick to it, is a function of *kapha* which provides stability to both body and mind.

A fault of discrimination occurs when one cannot decide whether or not it is appropriate to indulge in the use of any specific sense

object. A fault of determination occurs when one is unable to give up an indulgence which one knows is inappropriate. A fault of memory occurs when one fails to recall the deleterious effects of a past indulgence. Any of these faults is an aspect of perversity and will result in disease. According the Ayurveda, everyone who falls ill is basically "in-sane," since it is only when the mind fails in one of its functions that willfulness occurs.

An Ayurvedic text states that "all misery, including disease, is due to attachment to the desire for enjoyment." In addictions, for example, this attachment is due to the desire to be anesthetized, relaxed forcibly from the outside so that one is set at a distance from one's problems. Attachment to desire is an attempt to resist flowing along with Nature. This resistance yields stress, which causes agitation of body and mind and can be dealt with by the organisms in one of three primary ways:

- By holding the agitation within (fear)
- By projecting the agitation outward onto some external object or individual (anger)
- By suppressing the perception of the agitation because it fails to correlate with one's idealized environment (attachment, due to insensitivity).

All other emotions are permutations of these three. Envy, for instance, may be fearful, or angry, or merely insensitive. Lust is merely a form of anger clothed in sweetness.

Mental Health

When *prana*, *tejas* and *ojas* are in equilibrium with one another, *prana* (Air) blows on *tejas* (Fire) and enkindles it to the correct degree. Powerful *tejas* means strong mental digestion, an ability to adapt to all circumstances. *Ojas* carries the fire of *tejas* into the physical body. *Ojas* is a glandular substance that creates the body's aura and controls the amount of *tejas* that is allowed to pass down into the body to inflame the *agnis*.

There are therefore two paths to disease:

- Imbalance of the mind leads to disturbances of the balance of *prana*, *tejas* and *ojas* that in turn affects the body's *ojas* and thereby all the body's *agnis* (glandular secretions), leading to indigestion.
- Imbalance of the mind leads to willfulness, which results in improper food habits and leads to formation of *ama*, which interferes with *dhatu* nourishment and therefore interferes with the production of *ojas*. *Ama* directly causes indigestion.

One path is from subtle to gross, the other from gross to subtle; the results are identical. Lack of *ojas* means production of *ama*; lack of *ama*, increased *ojas*. All treatment of every disease must therefore consider both the mental and physical aspects.

Summary

Consideration of season (time cycles), field (the *dhatus* and *malas*), seed (*ama*) and water (the *doshas*) is essential in understanding disease causation, which passes through six progressive stages. All disease is due to indigestion, which in turn is due to mental perversity. Mind and body must be considered in every ailment.

To control the *doshas* at the stage of accumulation means not only to keep the body free of accumulations of *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*, but also to keep the mind free of the accumulations of its *doshas, rajas* and *tamas*, the twin causes of willfulness. Willfulness is nothing but glorification of the ego, a belief that one can ignore the rules of Nature.

LESSON SIX

Diagnosis

Diagnosis is observation, with the help of touch and questioning.

Diagnosis is estimation of the power of *agni* in the body and mind. Ayurvedic tradition describes eight mandatory diagnostic observations:

- Feces
- Urine
- Tongue
- Sound
- Touch
- Sight
- Face
- Pulse

In each of these observations, the first fact to be ascertained is the presence or absence of *ama*. No matter which *doshas* are disturbed, if *ama* is present, it is essential first to digest and remove the *ama* from the body and only then to remove the excess *doshas*. This is because if we attempt to eliminate the *doshas* while *ama* is present, the *ama* will block the channels through which the *doshas* should exit the body. It is just as if you

use water to try to unstop a clogged drain. You will merely make the drain back up further and cause the sink (the affected organ) to overflow onto the floor (the body) unless you first remove the obstruction or clog (the *ama*).

Since it is impossible to directly examine the *dosha* or the *srotamsi* for evidence of *ama*, it is essential to examine thoroughly the *malas* and the *dhatus*, for example, the fecal matter. Healthy feces has the consistency of a ripe banana and is relatively odorless. Stools of improper color—very dark for *vata*, very light for *kapha* and any other unusual color for *pitta*—that have a vile odor and are filled with partially digested food are definite indicators of *ama*.

Certain general signs and symptoms are pathognomonic of *ama*. They include:

- Any evidence suggesting obstruction to the *srotamsi*. Constipation indicates obstruction to the *mahasrotas*. Mucus may obstruct the *pranavahasrotas*. Cholesterol deposits in arteries and calcification in muscles both indicate the presence of *ama*. Only those obstructions that are due to muscular spasm may possibly not be associated with *ama*.
- Destruction of strength. Literally, the strength of body, digestion and mind "wander" from their normal locations and strengthens the *ama* instead of the *dhatus*.
- Heaviness in the body, head and mind.
- Abnormal movements of *vata*, of any sort (borborygmi, unusual nervous sensations, impaired muscular coordination and control, etc.).
- Lethargy, due to blockage of the *rasavahasrotas* so the *rasa* cannot perform its function of "exultation."
- Indigestion.
- Expectoration. The mouth seems to constantly fill with water (saliva) which the patient desires to spit out.
- Retention of wastes. Besides constipation this includes retention of urine and also inability to sweat, a sure sign of *ama*.
- Tastelessness of food or unusual tastes for common foods. This symptom not only indicates *ama* but increases it, since faulty taste signals incorrect information to the brain regard-

ing ingested food and results in secretion of inappropriate digestive juices.

- Fatigue without exertion.

Interviewing of the Patient

Dr. Lad has covered in detail the modes of inspection in diagnosis (See Chapter VI "Diagnosis," *Ayurveda, The Science of Self-Healing*). Interviewing is no less important than inspection, especially today when people are more and more mind-oriented and tend to misinterpret the messages their bodies are sending them. They are taught to suppress their symptoms rather than to treat the symptom as a friend who disappears automatically as soon as the disorder disappears. These continuous suppressions of symptoms alter both the body and the mind's perception of the body. It is important to take a thorough history from the patient for at least three reasons:

- To learn all past diseases and disease tendencies
- To interpret the patient's voice and speech patterns from a diagnostic point of view.
- To determine how the patient's conception of his or her disease state differs from the nature of the disease state as perceived by the physician. If the patient thinks the disease is serious and the doctor treats it cavalierly, a gap of credibility will be created. The physician must consider the patient's feelings at all times and must guide the individual into an appropriate understanding of the condition.

Sometimes the mere attention the physician shows the patient is enough to cure the disease, since frequently illness is due to frustration at the loneliness and alienation of modern life. A doctor must listen to the patient's woes, imaginary or real, with true interest and attention to demonstrate that there is someone who cares.

Doctor-Patient Communication

The structure of language sometimes makes it difficult to understand symptoms properly. For example, if the patient complains of constipation, his or her definition of constipation may or may not agree with the doctor's definition.

Therefore, whenever anyone complains of a specific symptom, such as constipation, it is essential to determine exactly what bodily experiences are occurring. One must inquire about the regularity of the bowel movements, their frequency and consistency and the sensations felt after the evacuation, especially including the question of whether there is a feeling of something lingering in the colon. What the patient does not say is sometimes more important than what he or she does tell the doctor, and this must be elicited.

The patient's vocal habits, voice quality and style of speech—overuse of nouns or verbs, deliberate use of ambiguous terms—must all be considered. The patient of a *vata* disease or with a *vata prakruti* will be quite talkative and nervous, with an irritating, non-melodious voice that grates on the ear, in consonance with *vata's* attributes of rough and dry. He or she tends to provide more information than is asked for, much of which is irrelevant, and finds it difficult to give an adequate history.

The *pitta* person speaks intensely and impatiently, presuming the doctor knows exactly what is intended, providing plenty of information while tending to blame the problem on some outside agency, individual or force. *Kapha prakruti* or *kapha* disorder makes the individual relatively uncommunicative. Such people stubbornly hide information with which they feel uneasy and sometimes can be very convincing with their deep melodious voices, unless the *ama* has so clogged their sinuses that the resonance is lost.

Symptoms

Once the physician has determined the patient's *prakruti* and allowed for the distortions the mind might cause, the symptoms are evaluated according to *dosha*. Each symptom may be correlated with a specific form of a *dosha* and, when all symptoms have been catalogued, the pathology of the trouble becomes apparent.

For example, pain after eating may be directly due to:

- *Kapha*—either too much or too little in the stomach
- *Pitta*—either too much or the right amount but in the wrong place
- *Vata*—either excess which causes spasm or obstruction due to *ama*

In these examples, it is *kledaka kapha* or *pachaka pitta* or *samana vayu* (usually) which are disturbed.

It is said, "There is no pain without *vata* disorder. There is no inflammation without *pitta* disorder. There is no pus formation without *kapha* disorder." Pain may be wholly due to *vata*, in which case it is intense, breaking, tearing, pricking or stabbing. Colic, which is spasm (continuous or throbbing) in a tubular organ, is a typically *vata* pain. *Pitta* pain is a burning, sucking or pulling motion plus heat, where the pure *vata* pain is due to excessive motion alone. *Kapha* pain is dull with heaviness or pressure, due to motion, which pushes, acting on inert matter.

Vata inflammation is characterized by less redness than is *pitta* inflammation and *kapha* inflammation is light or even whitish. *Vata* pus is thin and can be expressed from the boil or abscess with difficulty. *Pitta* produces hot, yellowish or greenish blood-stained pus. Pure *kapha* pus is much like pure *ama*: whitish-green or whitish with an offensive, rotten odor. It is produced in large quantity.

Even the stages through which a boil or abscess passes can be related to *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*. The first stage of a boil consists of a pain underneath the skin that flits from place to place without localizing. This is the *vata* stage because of the pain and the erratic movements beneath the skin. The second stage involves localization of the pain and production of inflammation that causes redness, swelling and a localized increase of temperature, all of which are associated with *pitta*. *Kapha* predominates in the third stage when the boil comes to a head. The pain decreases to an ache and the swelling increases while the inflammation declines.

Every boil involves all three *doshas* but each boil usually has one *dosha* in excess. A boil that is intensely painful and shows little *pitta* or *kapha* inflammation or pus, and which passes through all three stages very quickly, is due mainly to *vata*. A *pitta* boil passes through the *vata* stage quickly. The inflammation period is prolonged and the *kapha* stage of pus formation and bursting takes place quickly, as soon as the inflammation resolves. A *kapha* boil never really produces intense pain. It may linger for weeks before coming to a head and strenuous efforts may be needed to assist it to ripen.

The period of time taken by a disease to progress through the six progressive stages and then to resolve itself is called the *vyadhavasthakala*, or the disease time. Each disease has its own characteristic disease time and each *dosha* affects this time according to its attributes. Disease time must be considered in every case and allowed for in determination of treatment. In the simple case of a boil, for instance, there is no use in trying to bring it to a head when it is only in the *vata* stage of flitting about under the skin trying to find a location to settle into. At that moment in disease time, it is best to try to remove any excess *pitta* that might be present both in the specific body part affected and in the body as a whole. Failure to cooperate with and observe disease time will result in complications and slower healing.

Symptoms Characteristic for Each *Dosha*

As noted above, these symptoms may be due to the *dosha* acting on its own or may be due to the other *doshas* acting in conjunction with it.

Vata

Vata symptoms may be categorized thus:

- **Due to increased movement:** tachycardia (increased heart rate), diarrhea, increased peristalsis, giddiness, insomnia (increased thought movement in the mind), tics (habitual movements such as twiddling the thumbs).

- **Due to decreased movement:** bradycardia (decreased heart rate), impaired circulation, decreased peristalsis, paraplegia (due to reduced nerve activity), cramps (especially menstrual where *vata* is too weak or too overstrung to push the blood out), infertility when sperm motility is insufficient, mental disorders such as deafness, fainting and numbness of the extremities.
- **Due to perversion of movement:** including all movements that the body usually does not make such as continuous yawning or hiccuping, aphasic speech, convulsions, fits, tremors, choreas, delirium, hallucinations, mania and so on.
- **Due to perversion of form:** resulting from the dryness of *vata* drying out *kapha*, including cracking of the skin of the feet and of the fingernails, dandruff, split ends of the hair, dislocation of joints, fractures, spinal deformities, anomalies such as club foot and dwarfism, prolapse, contraction and atrophy of organs, and mental discontinuities including amnesia.

Pitta

Pitta produces symptoms involving:

- **Direct heat:** hyperacidity, fever, inflammation, increased sweating, burning sensations all over the body and fainting due to sunstroke or any other cause of increased heat in the brain, even anger.
- **Indirect heat:** gangrene and other sloughing of body parts—caused by *pitta's* hot and liquid attributes, all ulcerations, some diarrheas and bleeding from any orifice.
- **Change of color:** redness in any rash or inflammation, jaundice, anemia, moles and freckles, color blindness, abnormal colors of any *malas*, etc.

Kapha

Kapha symptoms are due either to obstruction in the *srotamsi* by displaced *kapha* or by great excess of *kapha* in its normal locations. These include:

- **Obstruction:** all symptoms of *ama* listed above plus atherosclerosis, goiter, pallor, cough, pressure symptoms in any body part, drowsiness.
- **Excess:** coldness, dullness, heaviness and whiteness of the body, oiliness of the hair and complexion, excessive expectoration of mucus, obesity and so on.

Summary

In addition to inspection, interviewing or case-taking is essential for diagnosis and should be performed carefully, both to prevent error and to identify with certitude the causative *doshas*.

LESSON SEVEN

Therapeutic Theory

The briefest possible definition of treatment is removal of the cause.

Merely determining a diagnosis never cures a patient. Certain criteria must be evaluated so that the physician can determine whether therapy will be successful or not. Other rules address themselves to each aspect of the patient's lifestyle with a view to making every action a healing one.

Modern medicine seems to thrive on crisis management, heroic attempts to suppress life-threatening symptoms. Ayurveda endorses the use of any method—surgery, drugs or whatever—to save life during a crisis, but Ayurveda emphasizes that crises never should be allowed to occur. Recall the *sutra* "always control the *doshas* at the stage of accumulation." Ayurveda does not believe in creating healing crises as some so-called natural therapists espouse. The crisis is to be dealt with only when unavoidable; otherwise treatment must proceed in such a gradual way that the organism is not disturbed further. A sick person is already miserable; why induce a healing crisis to compound their misery? Such strategies are as anti-biotic, "against life," as are the antibiotic drugs themselves. Ayurvedic therapies are to be planned thoroughly to give

maximum relief with minimum reaction. (See Chapter VII "Treatment," *Ayurveda, The Science of Self-Healing*). What use is a healing crisis if the patient is exhausted by it? The healing crisis is not life but only the cleansing of the organism; health is more than mere hygiene, it is good digestion and nutrition as well. Therefore, all aspects of treatment must be carefully studied.

Here we will consider:

- The essential ingredients of successful treatment
- The possible outcomes of therapy
- The types of people who always fall ill in spite of repeated treatment
- The modes of therapy: active and passive
- The times for taking medicine
- The specific outline for treatment of each of the three *doshas*
- The rules of convalescence

The Four Essential Ingredients of Treatment

Just as disease in Ayurveda is said to be a separate entity with a life-span (the disease time), treatment is also given a personality. Treatment is said to be like a cow: a fond mother whose only purpose is to nourish her calf. Just as a cow is supported by four legs and feet, treatment has four supporting feet, to each of which is ascribed ideal qualities:

- The physician is dexterous, has drunk deeply of the fountain of Ayurvedic wisdom—meaning especially the texts—has plenty of practical experience and is pure.
- The nurse is sympathetic, pure, dexterous and intelligent.
- The remedy is multi-form, multi-potent, well-potentiated and appropriate.
- The patient is affluent, obedient, receptive and courageous.

The essence of this age-old Ayurvedic doctrine is that the physician has both physical and practical knowledge and uses them with right intention, or such is the ideal. The ideal remedy can be prepared in many forms and is useful for many diseases and is selected

and prepared with a specific patient in mind, not on a mass basis. The nurse should be sympathetic to the patient's plight, comprehending all the physician's instructions and executing them wholeheartedly and thoroughly. The patient must obey any instructions without hesitation or fear.

The word "affluent" above suggests both that the patient should be willing to spend whatever is necessary to become really healthy and that he or she ought to be willing to adequately compensate the physician for his labors. It was essential in the past for patients to be willing to pay, for a true Ayurvedic physician never demands money for consultation. Whatever a patient offered was accepted with thanks. In fact, the texts state that it is better to consume snake venom or to be branded with a red hot iron rather than demand money from a poor patient as a precondition for treatment.

A deficiency in any one of these four feet will weaken the therapeutic effect as surely as lameness in a leg would debilitate a cow. However, since it is said that even if all other feet are deficient, a qualified physician can save the patient from calamity, and since if the physician is deficient all will be for naught even if the other feet are of superior quality, the physician is said to be the prime cause of treatment. The physician is necessary to compare the strength of the disease with the strength of the patient, considering the causes, the *doshas*, the affected *dhatus* or *malas*, the *prakruti*, the climate, time in all aspects and the patient's mental state.

Of all these, the patient's mental state is most important. In the case of a powerful disease afflicting a patient who has a great capacity for pain, the physician who is unskilled might suppose the disease to be minor and administer mild purificatory treatment that might actually increase the difficulty. Conversely if the disease is minor but the patient's mental capacity is weak and the patient displays greater distress than warranted, an ill-trained physician who administered powerful purifications would create complications. The physician who wishes to heal must relinquish opportunities for personal heroics and

must treat the 'patient as a mother would treat her child, with the same intense regard for his well-being.

The patient bears the responsibility to accept the physician as the vehicle through which the healing power of Nature will flow. To get the most benefit from a therapist, perfect faith is essential because faith is often the real medicine. Whenever an individual realizes that he or she has been living as an outlaw beyond Nature's limits and makes a sincere effort to return to a state of harmony, Nature responds by making him or her whole.

Thus is the importance of the patient's mental attitude to prognosis. If the patient is relying on some miraculous "magic bullet" medicine, cure is possible but, since the underlying cause still remains, that is, the basic inability to deal with the external environment due to a perverse desire to live independently of Nature, development of a new disease is inevitable. Cure becomes permanent only when one surrenders to Nature unconditionally. Sadly, many people run from healer to healer, medical system to medical system, searching for that "magic bullet," leading themselves further and further from true balance.

The Four Prognoses of Disease

Any disease has four possible outcomes:

1) Easily curable. This occurs when:
   a) The cause and symptoms are mild
   b) The *doshas*, *dhatus* and *malas* involved do not possess similar attributes that reinforce one another
   c) The *doshas* involved are different from the *doshas* predominating in the patient's *prakruti*, the season, or the local climate
   d) The disease is confined to one *srotas* and one *marga* (pathway)
   e) It is an acute disease without any complications
   f) Only one *dosha* is involved
   g) The body is amenable to all forms of medication and all four "feet" of treatment are available
2) Curable with difficulty. These diseases include:
   a) Illnesses of pregnant women, the aged or children

b) Diseases in which some factors like season or *prakruti* reinforce the *doshas* involved
c) Ailments that have complications
d) Disturbances that are no longer acute or that affect vital body parts
e) Diseases due to two *doshas*

Such diseases are more difficult to cure because of restrictions placed on therapeutic choices. In the case of a pregnant woman, for example, the strong, effective purifications such as emesis and purgation are forbidden. Or, when two *doshas* are involved, any medication must pacify both of them even if their attributes are contrary.

3) Ameliorable. A disease that is only ameliorable:
   a) Requires surgery
   b) Is very chronic
   c) Afflicts several vital body parts
   d) Possesses symptoms whose attributes conflict with one another.

Such diseases may be improved but not cured. Life may be supported with good hygiene and wholesome living, as the texts say, "in the same way that a collapsing structure is supported by pillars."

4) Incurable. These are diseases:
   a) Involving all three *doshas*
   b) All three *margas*
   c) All the sense organs and motor organs
   d) And in which weakness and restlessness predominate, causing excitability and eventual coma.

Such diseases present "death signs" which are symptoms or sensations that the patient experiences, or dreams the patient or his relatives may have or omens the physician may see.

The Four Categories of the Ever-Sick

Even in the case of easily curable diseases, optimism must be guarded when the patient is a:

- Priest, ascetic or religious fanatic who neglects his body because of excessive study or practice of rituals
- Socially or professionally ambitious individual who is preoccupied in gratifying the boss or some other influential person and thus neglects to stay healthy

- Businessman who is preoccupied with business
- Courtesan or anyone else who sells his or her talents (physical or mental) to gratify customers

Anyone who puts career before health is doomed to suffer repeated illness.

Purification and Palliation

Purification involves the active cleansing of the body by means of five processes: emesis, purgation, enema, nasal medication and bloodletting. (See Chapter VII "Treatment," *Ayurveda, The Science of Self-Healing*) Purification is best for strong individuals with mild diseases; palliation is usually indicated for weaker individuals who have strong, powerful diseases. Purification techniques should always be learned in person from an expert and should be avoided during any extremes of climate—heat, cold, rain and so on. Consequently, we will focus on palliation in this written lesson.

Palliation has seven aspects:

- Medication to digest accumulated *ama*
- Medication to strengthen the patient's *agni*
- Fasting from food
- Fasting from liquids
- Exercise
- Sunbathing
- Windbathing

Palliative treatment is administered after purification to remove any remaining *doshas* or instead of purification if purification is forbidden, as in the cases of pregnant women, the very young, the very old and the very weak.

Medication, Vehicle and Diet

Palliative treatment ordinarily consists of a medicine administered with an appropriate vehicle and a specific diet. The

vehicle or *anupana* is a substance that, when administered with the medication:

- Prevents any side-effects
- Encourages quick and efficient absorption of the medication
- Exerts a synergistic effect with the medication so that a smaller dose may be given.

Common *anupanas* include water, medicinal wines, herbal decoctions, fruit juices, medicinal jams, hot, unctuous food, butter, clarified butter (*ghee*), raw sugar, meat soup and honey. Honey is perhaps the best *anupana* of all because of its ability to penetrate to the most minute cells in the body without any need of being digested, since it is predigested by the bees.

Time for Taking Medicine

The dose of any medication is determined by the climate, season, involved *doshas*, patient's *prakruti*, patient's strength, strength of the disease and the form in which the medication is administered. Whatever the dose, there are ten times during the day when medicine is to be consumed. These are:

1. **First thing in the morning:** for *rasayana* (rejuvenation therapy) and for *kapha* diseases such as the common cold, bronchitis and obesity.
2. **Half an hour before eating:** for diseases of *apana* such as diarrhea, dysentery and colitis and for most diseases in the lower part of the body.
3. **In the middle of the meal:** after eating half the meal one consumes the medicine and then finishes eating. This is for diseases of *samana* such as disturbed peristalsis and for most *pitta* diseases. It can be used for any disease of the *mahasrotas*.
4. **Half an hour after eating:** after the noon meal for diseases of *vyana*, such as coldness of the extremities, and after the evening meal for diseases of *udana*, such as laryngitis, hic-

coughs and mental disorders. This form of administration may also be used for *kapha* diseases.

5. **At the beginning of the meal:** for patients who are delicate in constitution or for diseases that have affected the entire body. This prevents the overwhelming of the patient's strength by the strength of the medicine.
6. **Between meals:** for diseases of eye, ear, nose and throat and for diseases of *vyana*. This classification includes nocturnal medication. This involves laxatives as well, since they are taken between the evening meal and breakfast of the next day.
7. **Both at the beginning and the end of the meal:** as in cases of severe *vata* disturbance such as continual hiccoughs and tremors.
8. **Whenever necessary**: in diseases like asthma, cough and vomiting.
9. **With each morsel of food:** to increase *agni*, especially used in the administration of *vajikarana* (virilizing medication). Chutneys are an example of this sort of medication.
10. **After each morsel of food:** in heart disease and other grave conditions.

Eight Possible Violations of the Rules for Convalescence

Even after a disease has been cured there is a period of weakness during which overt stress can create a new disease or recreate the just-cured one. Eight common violations are:

- Excessive and forceful talking
- Traveling, especially long distances
- Excessive walking
- Continual sitting or lying in one position
- Overeating, especially if it leads to indigestion
- Inappropriate diet, especially with improper food combining
- Sleeping during the day, except during the summer
- Any kind of sexual activity

Yukti

It should now be obvious that treatment can become very complicated with all these factors to consider. Ayurveda believes that treatment is a coalition, a congress of a number of different factors, all of which are essential for cure; just as a potter's wheel, a potter's stick, clay, water, time, space, an oven and a potter are all necessary if one wants to make a pot. This principle is called *yukti*, which is defined as an effect that is produced from many causes all of which are essential to its production. With this is mind, consult Table Two for an outline therapy procedure for the three *doshas*.

Summary

This lesson has addressed the many factors considered in treatment, which is removal of the cause of the disease. Prognosis and therapeutic details were digested and the concept of *yukti* introduced. The following lesson uses indigestion, the most basic of all diseases, as an exemplary condition for outlining palliative treatment specific for the three *doshas*.

Table 2: Outline of Treatment

DOSHA	*VATA*	*PITTA*	*KAPHA*
PURIFICATION (SHODHANA)	Enema (mild)	Purgation, Bloodletting (soothing)	Emesis, Purgation (strong)
PALLIATION (SHAMANA)	1. Oil massage (plenty of oil)	1. Light massage with oil	1. Dry massage
	2. Sweating via wet heat (steam baths, hot tubs, etc.)	2. Mild heat before purifications; otherwise cooling showers or baths	2. Dry heat
	3. Oily medicines and diet, especially medicinal wines; mainly use of sweet, sour and salty tastes	3. Cooling medicines and diet; predominantly the sweet, bitter and astringent tastes	3. Dry, hot medicines and diet mainly of bitter, pungent and astringent tastes
	4. External and internal use of medicated oils	4. External and internal use of *ghee*, especially medicated	4. Use of small amounts of honey and aged wines
	5. Light exercise; mild sunbathing; Yoga[a]	5. Moderate exercise, ample moonbathing, some windbathing	5. Vigorous exercise, plenty of sunbathing and windbathing
	6. Adequate food; mono-diet if necessary for fasting	6. Ample food; raw diet if fasting required	6. Fasting, from even water if possible
	7. Mental relaxation and happiness; sense of security	7. Amusements, diversions, cool surroundings, sweet odors	7. Fasting from sleep, enforced mental exercises and deliberate mental irritation
	8. Bandaging and warm garments	8. Cool, white garments; soothing garlands	8. Medicinal cigarettes; rough, dry clothing
	9. Balancing, calming meditations	9. Visualization meditations	9. Active meditations

a. Yoga exercises are beneficial for all individuals but should be learned from an expert. One yogic tradition believes that *Shirshasana* (Head Stand) should only be used by advanced ascetics who practice perfect celibacy and is forbidden to ordinary people lest it cause side effects. (See Chapter XII, "Longevity," *Ayurveda, The Science of Self-Healing.*)

LESSON EIGHT

Therapeutics of Indigestion

The body is nothing but Fire.

Life is a series of digestions of food substances, events, emotions and concepts. Fire transforms the kinetic (*vata*) into the potential (*kapha*) and back again. Even Einstein's equation reflects this, on a cosmic scale: $E = mc^2$ where E = energy (*vata*), m = mass (*kapha*) and c = the speed of light (*pitta*, since heat is light). Since one must fight fire with fire, treatment involves fighting the fire of the disease with the fire of therapy, prescribed through the fire in the physician's mind. As digestion is the most basic of all diseases, we consider it here in some detail.

When a single *dosha* is disturbed, treatment is straightforward. When two or three *doshas* are disturbed, one first decides which *dosha* to work on first. Some authorities advise to work from the head down, that is first *kapha*, then *pitta*, then *vata*, to remove the coating of *ama* over the senses so that ingested food can be well digested and thus strengthen the organism. Sushruta advises first to deal with *pitta*, since it is the body's repository of *agni*, and then to control, in order, *vata* and *kapha*. Other authorities recall that *vata* is the strongest *dosha* and advise dealing with

vata at the outset and then with *pitta* and finally *kapha*. Vagbhata advises that whichever *dosha* is most disturbed should be addressed first and this seems to be a generally accepted rule.

Diagnosis of the Power of *Agni*

Good digestion is associated with these signs:

- After ingestion of the desired quantity of food, no discomfort is felt.
- There is no belching of gas that possesses the same odor and taste as did the ingested food.
- The emptying period of the stomach is proper, that is, the stomach does not feel full any longer than usual for that individual.
- No symptoms are produced during the passage of food through the small intestine; one does not even notice this state of digestion.
- The fecal matter is excreted at the habitual time and is of the proper consistency without any undigested material or *ama* in it.
- After the food is digested, the desire for food returns at the usual hour. This is the physical desire for food and not merely a mental desire meant for sense gratification.

If any of these criteria is lacking, indigestion is present.

Removal of the Cause

The first step in treatment is removal of the cause. Common causes of indigestion were mentioned in Lesson Five and are repeated here for convenience:

1. Excessive consumption of water
2. Improper food combinations
3. Restraint of natural urges
4. Improper sleep
5. Excessive sexual activity
6. Inattention to the rules for food consumption
7. Disturbances of the mind

The individual should be examined for each of these causes and appropriate measures should be taken so that this cause will not influence the individual during the treatment period.

One to one-and-a-half quarts of water is an individual's usual average daily requirement. Diabetics, people with *pitta prakruti* and individuals who eat heavy meals or fried food require greater quantities of water. If possible, it is best to see that the patient gets no water for several days and obtains moisture from other sources. For causes 2) and 6) a strict diet is prescribed; the patient is forbidden to have sex during the period of therapy and convalescence to eliminate cause 5); and some method of relaxation must be prescribed to deal with causes 3), 4) and 7). These rules must be followed strictly to eradicate the disease.

Purification or Palliation?

After diagnosing the disease and setting the general rules for treatment, one examines the patient's strength and the disease's strength. It is then decided whether or not to perform purification treatment continuing with palliation afterward, or whether merely to begin with palliation. Should one decide that purification is indicated, one must first remove all *ama* from the body. Except in emergencies, one should never perform purification when the body is full of *ama*. The best method for eliminating *ama* is to prescribe nil by mouth—no food and as little liquid as possible—for 24 to 48 hours, depending on the patient's strength and the power of the ailment. The liquid used should be tea made of powdered ginger administered in doses of one teaspoon at a time, just sufficient to prevent dehydration. As soon as the tongue loses its coating and the urine and feces clear up, sufficient *ama* has been removed to permit purification therapy.

Fasting

After *ama* is digested, a specific diet will be prescribed for the individual. Any kind of mono-diet like this is a sort of fast. Traditionally one does not immediately leap back into one's old food

habits even if the disease was a minor one. The first step is to give thin rice or barley gruel, increasing its thickness as the appetite returns. It is best to give the patient slightly less quantity than he desires to ensure that the increasing *agni* is not overloaded. When the gruel is being well digested, as evidenced by the *malas,* the tongue and the other criteria for good digestion, one can proceed from gruel to *khichadi* (rice, 2 parts and split mung beans, 1 part, cooked together) or to mung soup. Only when this is being well digested should one introduce other articles into the diet. Excessive fasting is as dangerous for health as is overeating. Since the aim of therapy is rekindling of the digestive *agni,* if *agni* is enkindled and no fuel is added to it, it will begin to consume the *dhatus* and weaken the individual further.

Vata-caused Indigestion

Increased *vata* causes excessive stimulation to *pitta* which loosens the feces. However, since the chief symptom in *vata* indigestion is that there are alternating periods of good digestion and of indigestion, constipation also happens. Constipation and loose stools alternate with one another, as does the presence of *ama* with the absence of *ama* in the *malas*. The patient's condition is ever-changing so he does not know what to eat or when to eat it in order to get good digestion. The desire for food is also erratic: when hungry, the patient's eyes are bigger than his stomach, yet when the hunger disappears it may not return for days at a time.

The principle treatment for *vata*-caused indigestion is enema. It is appropriate in this condition to use about one quart of decoction and six to eight ounces of oil. Always make sure that oil massage and fomentation are applied to the lower abdomen until the *doshas* are fully *utklishta* (increased in their own location) so that they will be well excreted. Good herbs for use in the decoction include castor root, *triphala*, sugar cane root, calamus root, celery seed, fennel seed and anise seed. After the enema fluid is excreted, warm the abdomen, keep the patient warm and feed a hot meal, preferably *khichadi* with *ghee*. The quantity of enema fluid should be reduced by four ounces per year

for each year the patient is under age 18. If the patient is over age 70, the amount should be 1 1/2 pints maximum.

After enema or instead of it, if enema is contra-indicated[1], the seven palliative methods to be followed are:

1. Medication to strengthen *agni*—articles should be used which are sour, salty and pungent. Among these are lemon, lime, grapefruit, sour pomegranate, raw mango, tamarind and *amalaki* (Indian gooseberry, Emblica efficinalis), rock salt and ginger, long pepper (Piper longum or *pippali*), *pippali* root, cubeb pepper and leadwort (Plumbago zeylanicum). Garlic is probably the superior choice. Of Indian herbal combinations, Hingashtak Churna and Bhaskar Lavana are outstanding. Unfortunately, these are not readily available in the United States. A preparation that can be made at home is called *vishvabheshaja vati*, or Universal Medication Pill (its recipe is given at the end of this lesson). Medicinal wines, especially those prepared of grapes, aloe vera or *pippali*, should be consumed in the dose of one ounce of wine plus one ounce of warm water twice daily after meals. Appropriate *anupanas* for these medicines include *ghee*, candied ginger, pomegranate jam, hot water and freshly made *takra* (a blend of yogurt and water with spices).
2. Medication to digest *ama*—*vishvabheshaja vati*, dry ginger, fennel or dill.
3. Diet—If there is no desire for food, the patient should fast for 24 to 48 hours. When there is desire for food, grains should be roasted and then made into gruel.
4. Liquids—when necessary give warm water that has been boiled into a weak tea with dry ginger.
5. Exercise—mild, especially Yoga stretches

1. See pages 74-75, " Enema Therapy," *Ayurveda, the Science of Self-Healing.*

6. Sunbathing—good.
7. Windbathing—indirect breeze to provide good ventilation; strong winds increase *vata*.

Emotional considerations—*vata*-caused indigestion is associated with consumption of food in an attempt to drown out fear. Since worry usually leads to fear, the affected individual's mind should be kept occupied so there will be no time to worry and thus no further increase in fear.

To effectively deal with the fear, the best thing is to meditate, but exercise is also very useful since it assists the body in cleansing itself simultaneously. Should this prove difficult then the individual should be interested in some hobby that will occupy his or her time. If this also proves unfeasible, the patient should be instructed to listen to music regularly. Any method may be employed to distract the person's mind from worry, even spectator sports.

Pitta-caused Indigestion

When very hot food containing excessive salty, sour or pungent tastes is ingested, *pitta* is increased. If this food is very liquid, the liquid attribute of *pitta* is increased which dilutes it and reduces its digestive ability. The chief symptom is that the patient demands hot spicy food but cannot digest what he is given.

The principle treatment is purgation after *ama* is removed and oil massage and fomentation have made the *doshas utklishta*. First, one to four ounces of *ghee* are given, followed by administration of barberry, *triphala*, bitter herbs like gentian root, or even syrup of figs. If the *doshas* become *utklishta* in the stomach, which is indicated by belching with a sour or bitter taste, or burning in the region of the stomach, nausea or excess watering of the mouth, vomiting should be administered with the aid of licorice decoction.

After purgation or if purgation is contra-indicated[1], the seven palliative methods to be followed are:

1. Medication to strengthen *agni—triphala*, gentian, *isabgol* (husks of Plantago ovata, a species of psyllium), powdered coral, sandalwood paste—especially when there is burning in the region of the throat and heart, vetiverian root, bitter herbs, dry ginger.
2. Medication to digest *ama*—dry ginger, fennel.
3. Diet—Absolute fasting until appetite returns, and then a light diet concentrating on the sweet, bitter and astringent tastes.
4. Liquids—Weak tea of sandalwood or vetiverian root, served cold.
5. Exercise—Strolling through a garden, especially near running water, to cool body and mind
6. Sunbathing—in moderation
7. Windbathing—encouraged, since the wind will dry the excess liquidity of *pitta*.

Emotional considerations—creating a complicated regimen for the patient to follow or forcing the patient as much as possible to be responsible for his own treatment may help negate the mind's natural impatience, which can rise when *pitta* is increased. It may also prevent further accumulation of anger, lust or jealousy.

Kapha-caused Indigestion

Kapha's qualities are opposite to those of *agni*, so increase of *kapha* quickly weakens *agni*. The typical symptom is that there is no desire for food. There is also heaviness in the abdomen, especially in the stomach, watering of the mouth, and dullness and heaviness in the body's limbs.

Vomiting is indicated and should be continued until the belching of gas from the stomach has no odor to it. As always, good oil massage and fomentation and good *utklishta doshas* are necessary. *Utklishta* is

1. For contra-indications, see p. 73, *Ayurveda, The Science of Self-Healing.*

indicated when there is belching with a sweet taste, heaviness in the stomach, nausea and watering of the mouth.

Fasting is best for palliation of *kapha* and often is sufficient in itself to cure the trouble. In cases where vomiting is contra-indicated[1], only palliation should be employed. The seven palliative methods to be followed are:

1. Medication to strengthen *agni—trikatu* (a mixture of dry ginger, black pepper and *pippali*), leadwort (known as *chitraka* in Sanskrit) or garlic.
2. Medication to digest *ama—trikatu* or dry ginger.
3. Diet—an absolute fast for as long as there is no desire for food. Then, roasted food concentrating on the bitter, pungent and astringent tastes.
4. Liquids—as little as possible; offer weak tea of dry ginger by the teaspoon, hot.
5. Exercise—as much as possible
6. Sunbathing—best if the patient sits in the sun, well wrapped so that the heat absorbed is retained within.
7. Windbathing—again, well wrapped.

Emotional considerations—*kapha* indigestion may be due to greed manifesting as desire to consume whatever one can obtain, or it may indicate simply a lackadaisical attitude toward one's health. Effort should be made to motivate the individual by vigorous therapeutic procedures.

Preparation of *Vishvabheshaja Vati*

Take a quantity of dry ginger powder in a mortar and add an equal quantity of fresh ginger juice. The juice can be prepared by crushing the fresh ginger in a mortar and pestle. Squeeze the crushed ginger

1. *See pages 71-72,* "Emesis Therapy," *Ayurveda, The Science of Self-Healing.*

through a cloth; or put the fresh ginger through a juicer. Then squeeze the remains through a cloth. One ounce of ginger juice should be poured over one ounce of dry ginger powder in a mortar. Rub with pestle until the mass is dried to the consistency of thick jam. Repeat this process with fresh ginger juice added to the mass a minimum of two more times and a maximum of twenty more times. Then roll out pills between the thumb and fingers of the right hand. Each pill should weigh about 250-300 mg. They should be about the size of a pea, making between 100 and 120 pills to the ounce. One or two pills are to be taken three to four times a day with warm water.

Summary

This lesson has outlined treatment of indigestion as an example of an Ayurvedic approach to a disease. After diagnosis, the causative factors are removed from the patient's environment, Then *ama* is eliminated from the body and *panchakarma* or purification therapy is employed. After purification, or instead of it in cases of weak patients, palliative measures are employed.

The example mentioned are only a few of the possibilities for treatment. Each patient is an individual and each treatment must be tailored to the specific needs of that individual. Because diet is both an important causative factor and a significant therapy, great emphasis must be placed on diet; some Ayurvedic physicians never use medication but treat with diet alone, since "the body is nothing but Fire."

Questions For The Ayurvedic Home Study Course

Lessons 5 - 8

Please answer each question as completely as possible.

1) What are the six progressive stages of disease? Describe in detail accumulation and explain why it is important to control the *doshas* at this stage.

2) What are the seven principle causes of indigestion? Explain how excessive sleep and excessive sexual activity can cause disease.

3) Discuss the Ayurvedic concept of mental health. Which *dosha* controls the power of discrimination? What happens when discrimination is weakened?

4) What are the signs and symptoms indicative of *ama* in the system? Explain which *dosha* is involved in each sign and symptom. Then explain which sub-*dosha* (form) of the *doshas* each sign and symptom is connected with.

5) What are the characteristics of a *kapha*-type boil? Give typical symptoms in *vata* diseases.

6) Why is the physician said to be the chief cause of success in treatment? What is the ideal physician-patient relationship.

7) What are the four possible prognoses of any disease? Give the criteria for determining a disease to be easily curable.

8) What is an *anupana*? What are common *anupanas*? Why is honey an ideal *anupana*?

9) List the ten possible timings for taking medicines. Which forms of which *doshas* are involved if the medicine is prescribed to be taken at the middle of the meal?

10) What are the characteristic symptoms of *vata*-caused indigestion? Outline its treatment.

Please complete your answers and, if you have access to e-mail, send them as an attachment to dseeger@ayurveda.com. If you do not have e-mail, please return completed answers to:

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Lessons and Lectures on Ayurveda

Part Three

by
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Ayurvedic Physician

LESSON NINE

Food

Food is the prana of all beings.
Life is a continual search for food:
physical, mental or spiritual.

There is a saying in Sanskrit: *Jiveo jivasya jivitam,* life lives off life. We are able to live because we consume substances that are alive or were very recently alive. From Nature's viewpoint all life has an equal right to exist. Therefore, the taking of another life, even that of a cabbage, is an act that should be performed with sincere attention to its meaning. The ancient Vedic tradition of India regards eating as a sacred act. Just as offerings are made into a sacrificial fire for propitiation of various cosmic forces, offerings of food are made into the internal digestive fire for propitiation of the indwelling spirit.

Each morsel of food must give up its individual existence and be transmuted so that it can participate in the greater existence of the human body. It is a mystery: that which is "not you" is converted into that which is part of "you." When food material is inserted into the body without digestion, it creates an inflammatory reaction but, once it is digested, it is adapted to compose new body parts. This change is under the control of the ego acting through the digestion. Digestion breaks the food down into bits that are so small that they lose their own individuality and can be assimilated into the body's individuality.

Indian science teaches us that the ego identifies itself with each and every cell continuously throughout life—or it should do so, for when it does not, severe diseases occur, including cancer. Cancer is a rebellion of a group of cells against the central authority of the ego. This is opposite to the natural order in which the cells give up their own individuality to serve as parts of a whole. Death of an organism occurs when the ego cannot or will not identify any longer with the body.

This explains why neurotics use food to feed their egos: it gives them a sense of accomplishment, and of domination, to eat. To prevent this tendency of the mind, Ayurveda suggests that eating become as ritualized as possible to emphasize its sacramental aspect, creating an automatic abasement of the ego's self-congratulatory power in the presence of the Infinite.

The Ritual of Eating

Perform one's morning routine, paying particular attention to the removal of urine and feces. If *ama* is present in these *malas* or on the tongue, or if the face is not lustrous, it is wise to fast to restore the organism to balance and permit *agni* to be strengthened.

Before eating one should either bathe or at least wash the hands, face and feet to purify the sense organs that will be fed and to soothe the nervous system.

Always sit while eating, facing east if possible to properly align the body with the earth's magnetic field and the sun's gravity, since the sun is Fire and so influences digestion.

Select an isolated, clean area.

Avoid restaurants, catered food and fast food. In India most cooks are selected from the priestly class so that at least some uplifting spiritual effect might be transferred into the food. It is believed that

someone who sells you food for profit has only his profits in mind, not your digestion.

If possible the right nostril should be functioning, since the right nostril heats the body and so increases the *agni*. One can accomplish this by lying on the left side for a few minutes before the meal, by plugging the left nostril, by hooking the left arm over a chair back or by right nostril *pranayama*.

Once all is in readiness, pray. Give thanks to Nature for providing you with food and thank whichever deity you worship.

Before beginning the meal, feed someone. Traditionally a five-fold offering was made: to the sacred fire, a cow, a crow, a dog and another human being like a child, a beggar or anyone outside one's own family. This is again a way of controlling the ego, an admission that the food is intended not for mere self-gratification but for the greater good of all beings. Feed anyone—a pet, a neighbor, a stranger.

Concentrate on your food; no TV, radio, stereo or conversation. Observe silence during the meal, and sit and chat afterward if desired.

Chew each morsel at least thirty-two times (once for each tooth) and, when feasible, eat with your hands so that your skin can send clues such as temperature, texture and homogeneity of the food to the brain to enhance digestive *agni*. All five senses eat when you eat a meal, so your food should be attractive to the eye; tasty, aromatic, with texture and sound — like the bubbling of a casserole — placating their respective sense organs.

Approach each food item with reverence and love. Even if you are served something you do not like, consume it with respect for its sacrifice, lest your hate for it sticks to it and accompanies it inside you.

At the end of the meal again give thanks, clean the mouth, apply water to the eyes to prevent weakening of the vision since *pitta*

dominates at this time, urinate but try to avoid defecation and take a brief walk, 100 steps or so.

Avoid exercise or sex within an hour of consuming food and sleeping or studying within two hours.

Never eat when angry, depressed, bored or otherwise emotionally unstable, immediately after exertion or when not physically hungry. Do not eat *kapha*-causing foods at night such as melons, yogurt, sesame products, cheese and ice cream.

The *kapha prakruti* person should never eat more than two meals a day and should allow at least a six hour gap between one meal and the other. *Pitta prakruti* people should eat three times a day with at least a four hour gap. *Vata prakruti* people should always eat small meals three or four times a day but with at least a two hour gap in between them.

Quantity of Food

All food is either inherently light or heavy for digestion. Light foods include rice, mung beans and wild meat such as venison. Heavy foods include milk, raw fruit and vegetables, black beans and red meat. Cooking and preparation can alter these qualities: milk becomes lighter when it is heated with saffron, and rice is made heavier by cooking with milk.

In general, meat is heavier than vegetables, pulses (legumes) and grains; raw food is heavier than cooked; and preserved food is heavier than fresh. Raw food and cooked food should never be eaten together at the same meal, excepting small amounts as appetizers or chutneys.

You may eat to your fill of light food, but not beyond. However, only eat one-half the quantity of any heavy food that you might desire. For example, if you know two helpings of a heavy food would fill you up, eat only one. People who are weak, ailing, sedentary or do not exercise should not take more than one-half their capacity of any solid

food and should take one-fourth their capacity as liquid and leave one-fourth of the stomach empty to allow room for the nutrients to mix with the digestive juices.

Preparation of Food

Avoid food articles that are known to be wrongly prepared, such as those that have honey baked in them, since honey must never be heated or cooked. Honey has a hot attribute and heating it makes it hotter, which then creates excess heat in the body.

Menstruating women should not cook, since they are involved in a cleansing process and should concentrate on that cleansing and not work.

Overcooked, undercooked, burnt, unpleasant tasting, unripe, overripe, putrefied, stale and otherwise revolting food should never be consumed.

Only someone who loves you should cook for you since the intentions of the cook will flow out into the food.

Selection of Food Articles

In general, it is better to use articles that have attributes opposite to the attributes of climate, season and *prakruti.* For example, use cooling food in summer and hot, wet food in cold, dry climates. A healthy individual who follows a strict routine may find it appropriate to use local food at all times during the year.

As an example, the mango is hot and grows during the summer season. Since in the summer all the body's *dhatus* become "hotter" because the body is trying to come into equilibrium with the external environment, mango can help with this process of seasonal adjustment by providing both nourishment and heat. But it should always be consumed with appropriate antidotes to prevent *pitta* accumulation and those persons who have weak *agnis* should eat it sparingly or avoid it altogether.

In conditions in which an individual has the chance for a *dosha* to become disturbed by some activity, food of that *dosha* should not be consumed. For example, *vata*-causing food should never be given to anyone who is exhausted because of hard work, sex or exercise since *vata* could be disturbed immediately as a result.

Also, the amount of fiber in the food should be determined by the *prakruti*. *Vata* people require much fiber since their digestive systems tend to be constipated and they tend toward hypoglycemia. Fiber controls both fat and sugar metabolism. *Kapha* people need moderate amounts of fiber and *pitta* people need little, since their bowels move freely anyway.

Once you have started a meal with heavy food, eat only heavy food during that meal, and vice versa. If you have a hot meal, eat only warm articles during it; all cold articles should be consumed later at a separate meal. This refers not only to the temperature of the food but also to its *virya*. For example, fish is sweet and so is milk but, since fish is hot in *virya* and milk is cold, they must not be consumed at the same meal lest allergy result.[1]

Food must be consumed in appropriate proportions. Whenever honey and *ghee* are mixed together, they are poisonous if mixed in equal proportions according to weight, but are invigorating if mixed in unequal proportions according to volume.

Satmya

Since all of us have habits we fall into when eating, the body takes account of this and habituates itself to our (mental) habits. This habituation is called *satmya*. For example, someone may have the habit of always eating cooked food. If one day he eats raw food, he will not digest it well because his system has grown accustomed to having only cooked food offered to it. This also applies to hot food versus cold food and to most addictions, such as to alcohol. Once an individual

1. See Chapter IX "Tastes," *Ayurveda, The Science of Self-Healing*

becomes used to drinking, he will not become acutely ill each time he drinks even though he probably did the first time he drank. This is the power of *satmya*. However, the disease process will be going on silently within him at all times and eventually it will emerge as cirrhosis or liver failure.

Likewise *pitta* people sometimes become *satmya* to hot spices because, whenever they eat them, the spices' heat causes perspiration that temporarily cools the *pitta* individual. However, this is only temporary and eventually the *pitta* builds up within and manifests as a disease. Use of sugar in hypoglycemic people can also be a sort of *satmya*.

Whenever such a habit is detected it should be eliminated, if the patient is willing to cooperate. It will take at least seven days, and usually thirty days, to remove a habit; never less. If one wishes to try to do it within seven days for, say, coffee, and one is drinking four cups daily, then the first day the quantity should be reduced to three cups. The second and third days one should drink two cups, and for four days more only one cup is allowed. On the eighth day, none whatsoever is consumed.

Some habits are good, of course. The following foods should be made habitual in the diet, providing of course that one is not allergic to them: ginger, churned yogurt (*takra*), rice, wheat, barley, daikon radish, grapes, mung beans, pomegranates (small quantities), *ghee*, fresh rain water, onion, garlic and, for those who use salt, rock salt. The only meat allowed to be taken daily is wild game.

The foods that should not be made *satmya* but should be consumed only occasionally include yogurt as opposed to buttermilk or *takra*, dried meat, pork, mutton, beef, dried vegetables, molasses and cheese. Also foods that are very cold, very hard, tasteless or too intense tasting, such as too sour, etc. and leftovers should (theoretically) never be consumed.

Although Ayurveda prescribes meat for use when the patient is extremely debilitated, there are several reasons why meat should be avoided by the healthy:

- It is very heavy for digestion.
- It promotes speed rather than endurance. Compare a tiger with an elephant.
- Today's meat is of poor quality, full of antibiotics and other drugs, and taken from animals grown on feedlots and never exercised, so they are full of *ama*.
- Meat putrefies faster than other foods and produces *ama* more easily.
- The fear felt by the animal as it waits to be slaughtered and the hatred it feels for the human who kills it change the composition of the flesh and make the eater prone to increased fear and anger.
- Meat is *mamsa* and is meant for increasing *mamsa*, but in those individuals who do not exercise vigorously daily meat will increase fat instead.
- Ayurveda believes in the law of *karma*, of action and reaction or, as Jesus said, "He who lives by the sword will die by the sword." Food collected with violence will increase violence in life.

Food Effects on the *Doshas*

No matter how good any chart may be, it cannot include all information pertaining to a subject. Any chart that advises concerning *dosha* and food requires close study and practical experience.[1] It is important to realize that attributes may change due to:

1. Quantity—although beef and pork are hot, some texts say they are cold because when they are consumed for a long time or in large quantity they have the effect of depressing *agni*. Beets and carrots, on the other hand, being sweet and wet, do not demonstrate their internal heat unless they are consumed regularly and then they may disturb *pitta.Pitta* people who regularly eat bananas may suffer from increased

1. See Chapters VIII & IX, *Ayurveda, The Science of Self-Healing*

pitta but usually do not if they only eat them occasionally, since the main taste is sweet which controls *pitta*. Pomegranate has two varieties, sweet and sour. While sweet pomegranate controls all three *doshas*, it may, if consumed regularly, mildly disturb *vata* because its aftertaste is astringent and it promotes constipation. Sour pomegranate may disturb *pitta* also. Even castor oil may have a sweet (anabolic) effect if taken in small quantities since it strips *ama* out of the *dhatus* and therefore promotes *dhatu* nutrition. Therefore some authorities say castor oil has a sweet *vipaka*.

2. Action—Both papaya and pineapple are wet and sweet and so are not good for *kapha*. But because both fruits contain digestive enzymes, if eaten in small amounts they will help reduce *kapha*, since they will promote digestion and thus decrease *ama*. Celery is diuretic and cold, so is not good for *vata* but, because of its minerals, it can reduce *vata* especially when given as a juice in a combination.
3. Ripeness—A very ripe persimmon increases *kapha* but one that is not so ripe will not increase *kapha* because of its astringent taste. The mango fruit is astringent when it first appears, sour when it is full grown but unripe and sweet once it ripens. Raw mango, though sour, reduces *pitta* if properly prepared. Raw mango may be made into chutney with coriander leaf (cilantro), coconut and spices, or it may be prepared into syrup with raw sugar and diluted into a cooling drink. Either preparation helps control *pitta*. Ripe mango, if sour and improperly antidoted, increases *pitta*.
4. Freshness—Very sweet yogurt may show sweet *vipaka* if consumed occasionally in small quantities. As honey ages, its qualities increase and it becomes more and more curative for all three *doshas*. Solidified cane syrup more than seven years old becomes a heart tonic, while fresh cane syrup tends to increase *ama*.
5. Cooking—Apples, though tending to increase *vata*, will decrease *vata* if properly cooked, for instance, with cinnamon and raisins. Okra also loses it *vata*-causing properties if it is

boiled but becomes more *vata*-producing if it is fried. Onion is pungent when raw but sweet when well-cooked. Cucumber when cooked with oil and spices loses its tendency to increase *vata*. In fact most raw food is dangerous for *vata* people and most well-cooked food can at least be tolerated temporarily by them.

6. Variety—Eggplants in India are small and greenish-purple, pungent in taste and hot in *virya*. Eggplants in America are large and dark-purple and are cold and sweet. American eggplant usually increases *vata* and Indian eggplant often increases *pitta*. Varieties are important in all foods, especially apples, bananas, pomegranates and the like. Some onions are sweet in taste, hot in *virya* and sweet in *vipaka*.
7. Components—Egg white is cold and reduces *pitta*; egg yolk is hot and increases *pitta*. The overall effect of the egg depends on how it is prepared. Raw egg, even with the white, is hotter than cooked. Poached eggs are cooler than fried, being cooked at a lower temperature and also possessing less fat. Scrambling an egg with milk and/or butter makes the egg cooler. An omelet can be made hotter or cooler according to the spices included. Chilies, tomatoes and onions will heat it up and mushrooms or cilantro will cool it down.

The above are only examples; each food article must be considered from each standpoint. And, even for identical varieties of the same food, qualities may differ according to the climate and soil the food was grown in.

Antidotes

Antidotes exist for every attribute of every substance. They may involve adding something or performing some action. In the case of yogurt, spices like cumin, ginger, green chilies and black pepper are added according to *dosha* and churning is performed to produce buttermilk or *takra*. The spices reduce the *kapha*-forming attributes of yogurt by their hot, light, intense and drying qualities, and churning

breaks up the yogurt gel to make it easier to digest so *ama* will not result.

Sometimes the antidotes may grow on the same plant; strawberry leaf helps antidote strawberry, mango seed helps antidote mango. Or the antidote may exist within the material. Guava without its seeds is so *ama*-forming it is classed as a slow poison. Lemon seed, if consumed, destroys all the beneficial effects of lemon.

However, the simplest method of antidoting involves cooking. Fish cooked with fennel or in coconut milk loses much of its intensity. Beans cooked with spices lose any remaining *vata*-causing properties if oil is added during cooking. Each food requires antidoting according to the *prakrutis* of those who will be eating it.[1]

Mental Effects

Finally, all food articles should be selected with awareness of the effects they are likely to have on the mind. Some foods, including milk, mung beans, rice and most fruits, make the mind more balanced and calm. Most foods that are healthful and promote bodily development, such as whole grains like wheat and millet, fresh vegetables, other beans and peas besides mung and some fruits, invigorate the mind as well as the body and make the mind more active. This increased activity is good unless the individual is already overly active mentally, in which instance it may be improperly digested and may lead to misuse of the sense organs.

Foods that are rotten, putrid or stale, and even fresh foods of certain types, like most varieties of meat and fermented foods, tend to temporarily increase mental energy but decrease it in the long run. Even if they give a person short-term energy they dull the mind, making it less able to appreciate subtleties. This is also true of certain vegetables such as onion and garlic. While this "grounding" effect

1. See Appendix A, "Food Antidotes," pp. 154-56, *Ayurveda, The Science of Self-Healing*.

may help reduce mental hyper-activity and thus relax the body, the overuse of such foods may indirectly predispose one to disease even if they may ameliorate illness temporarily.

LESSON TEN

Medicinals

Food is medicine, medicine is food.

Every action and every substance act as either food, medicine or poison for an organism, according to whether they act to nourish the body, to increase the digestive *agni* or to reduce the digestive *agni*, respectively. Whether a substance or action is a food, a medicine or a poison to the body/mind depends on the circumstances in which it is taken. For example, yogurt is a food ordinarily, yet it becomes a medicine when it is churned with water and spices, like cumin, to form *takra*. *Takra* is used to help cure diseases like colitis. When yogurt is consumed by a *kapha prakruti* person or by someone in whom there is increased *kapha* or a *kapha* disease, especially if it is eaten during the *kapha* season or time of day, it acts as a poison and produces *ama*. Exercise is a food for the body when performed regularly, as it helps increase muscle mass, a medicine when it is used to help cure diseases, as in obesity, and a poison when it is indulged in excessively, since it disturbs *vata*.

Medical Lore

There is no substance in the world that does not have medical

properties. Ayurveda's vast knowledge of the uses of herbs and other substances was gained by the dint of long experience. Sages and ascetics like Charaka, whose very name means "wanderer," used to roam the forests watching the behavior of animals, noting which animals were ill and which changes they made in their diets to get well. These wanderers would then experiment with the substances the animals used, trying out these substances not on other beings but on themselves, collecting and comparing their observations. The results of this long experimentation were collected to form Ayurveda.

Thus in order to understand how to administer medicinal substances, we must study their attributes carefully, just as the ancient sages did. There are at least 500 substances commonly used in Ayurvedic preparations, besides all the materials ordinarily reserved for routine use as food and only occasionally utilized as medicine.

Collection of Herbs

Each substance's attributes are not eternal and unchangeable. Depending upon the quality of soil in which plants are grown, certain qualities may be increased and others decreased. Two specimens of the same plant from two different regions of a country may have widely varying results when employed therapeutically. In addition, those plants growing in polluted locations or in inauspicious areas, such as in cemeteries or near anthills, should not be used.

Different parts of each plant must be collected during different seasons. In India, branches are collected when sap is concentrated within, usually during the rainy season or during the spring. Roots are collected during late spring or winter before sap develops. Bark, bulbs and latex are collected during autumn, sap during the winter, and flowers and fruits whenever they appear.

Before collecting these parts, it is appropriate to face east or north and express to Nature a sincere intent that the vegetation taken will be employed to heal sickness and will not be used either to cause sickness or to profiteer from the sale of any medication prepared from it.

Vegetables also have sense organs and can feel pain and they appreciate reassurance that they have not lived in vain when they are called upon to sacrifice their lives for the well-being of animals.

After picking, the plants are preserved from fire, water, smoke, dust and insect damage and are then compounded into remedies.

Medicinal Preparations

Each medicinal herb, animal or mineral substance requires a different mode of preparation according to the specific causes and symptoms of the disease. The classical example involves preparation of emetic medication from *Madana Phala*, the "emetic nut" of India (Randia dumetorum). In cases where therapeutic vomiting is necessary and where there is heartburn and bleeding via the rectum, indicating increased *pitta*, this nut should be simmered in milk, which naturally is cool and controls *pitta*. The milk should be given to cause emesis so that the *pitta* in the body will be reduced at the same time that the purification is performed for the stomach. When there is vomiting, nausea or asthma, this milk prepared with the nut should be made into yogurt and used. The yogurt will help in making the *kapha utklishta* (increased in its own location) so that it will be expelled thoroughly. If *pitta* is disturbed in the chest, throat and heart, then the cream should be removed from the milk prepared above and administered hot to make *pitta utklishta*.

In cases of indigestion due to *kapha* where the body has become thin, the butter made from the cream of the same milk should be employed. If the patient is very delicate and hates to take medicine and if both *pitta* and *kapha* are disturbed, the powder of the "emetic nut" is applied to a lotus flower and the patient is requested to smell the flower. Alternatively, the flower's pollen, which would now contain the powder, would be administered with milk or mung bean soup.

In other conditions this fruit is to be compounded into jams, pills, suppositories, powders or potions, depending on specific

requirements. Decoctions are also prepared and even sweetmeats may be concocted.

A similar example, involving garlic, further illustrates the vastness of possibilities in medicinal preparations. In *pitta* increase, such as acidity or gastrointestinal bleeding, garlic should be boiled in milk and only the milk administered. In patients weakened by disease, garlic should be made into a medicinal *ghee* or butter. To inflame *agni*, garlic should be lightly sautéed in *ghee* and then employed in food preparation. For external applications such as removal of warts and breaking open of boils, raw garlic juice or paste should be applied. Garlic preserves or jams are given to growing children and to aged patients. *Ama* is best eliminated from the body by use of pills made of garlic mixed with other herbs. Enemas are sometimes given with decoction of garlic, especially in cases of excessive *ama* in the colon with great disturbance of *vata*. Sometimes a whole clove of raw garlic is put unbroken into the ear to eliminate earache or ear infection.

The Five Chief Preparations

Traditionally, five modes of preparation are most often employed in Ayurveda for herbs. They are:

1. **Decoction:** 1 part of fresh herb plus 16 parts water by weight, boiled down until 1/4 of the original volume remains. If the plant has dried, take one part water by weight and add it to the plant material and let it sit for a half-hour or more and then use it. This decoction is ordinarily administered in doses of one to two tablespoons at a time with an equal amount of water added as *anupana*.
2. **Expressed juice:** the leaves or other parts of the plant are crushed and the juice extracted through a cloth. Dose varies according to potency of material.
3. **Paste:** the plant parts are thoroughly crushed when fresh until a paste is obtained and this paste is administered.
4. **Hot infusion:** 1 part of plant plus 8 to 10 parts of water. The plant is placed in a container and hot water is poured over it and is left for no less than one half-hour and often longer.

Good for herbs whose properties would ordinarily be destroyed during the process of boiling.

5. **Cold infusion:** same as for hot infusion but cold water is used and the material may be kept for twelve hours or so to promote extraction of all essences. Also good for delicate plants and plant parts and in *pitta* diseases where coolness is essential.

Medicinal wines are prepared by fermentation of decoction or of expressed juices; dose is as for decoctions. Powders are usually taken with honey or with hot water as an *anupana*, in doses of 1 to 6 grams at a time, depending on the herb.

Specific Medicinals

"Effects of Herbs Common to Both India and America" on page 120 lists the *rasa*, *virya*, *vipaka* and *doshic* effects of a few herbs that are common to both America and India. Thereafter each herb's important properties and uses and the body systems it affects are summarized.

Angelica

Systems affected: reproductive system
***Doshas* affected:** controls all three *doshas*
Properties: strengthening, invigorating, purifies the blood

The species used in India is commonly *Angelica glauca* which is said to be especially good for providing strength and energy to women. The root is anti-spasmodic, promotes menstrual flow and is beneficial especially in conditions where the menses have become irregular.

Asparagus Root

Systems affected: reproductive organs, muscles
***Doshas* affected:** controls all three *doshas* but especially *vata* and *pitta*.
Properties: tonic, nutrient, increases milk and sexual secretions

Asparagus racemosus helps increase anabolism in an emaciated individual and can also be employed in *pitta* diseases, especially of the urinary tract such as passage of blood in the urine. Asparagus root is often taken by simmering it in milk into a thick drink or as a medicated *ghee*.

Barberry

Systems affected: digestive tract, liver and spleen, skin, eyes
***Doshas* affected:** reduces *pitta* and *kapha*
Properties: scraping action, tonic, laxative

The Indian species is *Berberis aristata*. Oregon grape root is another species of the same genus with all plants possessing approximately equal properties. Berberine is the active alkaloid in these plants. Barberry is laxative and thus beneficial to all *pitta* conditions. It is especially good in jaundice and in liver sluggishness since it both improves *agni* and increases appetite. It helps eliminate hemorrhoids. Externally its paste is applied to *pitta*-type skin disorders, it purifies and heals them and its extract is combined with honey or milk for application to swollen eyes and to remove *doshas*, especially *kapha*, from the eyes. Internally it assists reduction of swollen liver or spleen. When barberry is not available, Ayurvedic texts mention turmeric as its substitute.

Basil

Systems affected: *rasa*, skin, digestive tract, respiratory tract
***Doshas* affected:** decreases *vata* and *kapha*; can sometimes increase *pitta* except when *pitta* is associated with *ama*
Properties: cures fevers, purifies skin and digestive membranes, helps to oxygenate and invigorate the body

Indian "holy basil" is *Ocimum sanctum* and is more effective than common basil when used as a medicine. Millions of Indians worship holy basil as the embodiment of the cosmic force that preserves life (Vishnu).

Holy basil's *prabhava* is that it is effective in removing fever of any type, even though it is pungent and hot. It is most effective in diseases of the lungs, bronchi and throat and is used even in the first stages of cancer. Discolored patches of skin respond to combined in-

ternal and external use of holy basil if salt is eliminated from the diet during the period of treatment. The plant itself purifies the air around any dwelling near which it is planted. It has been shown to produce ozone by modern researchers.

Bayberry

Systems affected: respiratory tract, digestive tract, nervous system
***Doshas* affected:** decreases *vata* and *kapha*, can increase *pitta*.
Properties: eliminative, purificatory

The Indian species (*Myrica nagi*) is famous as a "nasal purge" especially for swoons, head colds and headaches. The powdered bark is taken nasally and is used internally with honey or fresh ginger juice as an *anupana*. It is also employed as a poultice to purify and heal wounds, as a mouthwash or gargle in mouth ulcers or toothache, as a poultice over the pubic region for menstrual pain. The oil is said to be especially useful in paralysis.

Bay Leaf

Systems affected: digestive tract, respiratory tract
***Doshas* affected:** decreases *vata* and *kapha*, increases *pitta*
Properties: digestive, appetizing

Cinnamomum tamala is equivalent in properties to Western bay leaf which may be substituted for it. It is called in Sanskrit "fire leaf" because it is so beneficial in digestive disorders. It should be employed in most meat dishes on a regular basis to reduce the meat's heaviness. To expel *ama* from the body, especially when the *ama* has become thoroughly putrefied, equal proportions of the powders of cinnamon, cardamom and bay leaf are mixed together and taken with honey.

Bermuda Grass

Systems affected: *rasa*, *rakta*, *meda*, urinary tract, reproductive organs
***Doshas* affected:** reduces *kapha* and *pitta*
Properties: hemostatic, dries excess fluids in the body

Cynondon dactylon, a well-known weed in the West, is an exceedingly useful medication. It is effective in lowering the blood sugar of diabetics, an observation taken directly from Nature since elephants are known to gorge on Bermuda grass when they have overindulged in sugar cane.

Its mild diuretic effect makes it useful in most urinary diseases and also in dropsy (ascites) and in fact in most *kapha* disorders. It can stop bleeding anywhere in the body; for example, its juice instilled into the nose will stop a nosebleed or, taken as an enema, will soothe bloody dysenteries. One ounce of the juice taken every fifteen minutes will arrest bleeding piles or excessive menstrual bleeding. The juice can be used as rejuvenative therapy to regulate habitually excessive menstrual flow.

BOUGAINVILLEA

Systems affected: *meda*
***Doshas* affected:** decreases *vata* and *kapha*, increases *pitta*
Properties: anti-diabetic

The *prabhava* of Bougainvillea is to eliminate adult-onset (insulin-independent) diabetes. Twelve of the fresh leaves or one teaspoon of the leaf powder is consumed every morning on arising for at least four months.

CANNABIS

Systems affected: digestive tract, circulatory system, nervous system
***Doshas* affected:** decreases *vata* and *kapha*, increases *pitta*; continuous use eventually disturbs all three *doshas*
Properties: appetizer, constipating

Cannabis indica is sadly misused in the West. Most often in India the flowers are employed therapeutically. The smoke of the burning plant is allowed to fumigate the perineal area in cases of hemorrhoids, hernia and dysentery. The powdered flowers are mixed with nutmeg and taken in *takra* or honey for intractable dysentery. It lowers the blood pressure and also the pressure inside the eye, so it is beneficial in glaucoma. It can increase the appetite of cancer patients and help digest what is eaten.

CARAWAY SEEDS

Systems affected: digestive tract, respiratory tract
***Doshas* affected:** reduces *vata* and *kapha*, sometimes increases *pitta*
Properties: relieves gas, digestive

Caraway seeds (*Carum carvi*) are a good substitute for the Indian *ajwan* (*Carum copticum*). Their *prabhava* is to remove gas from the intestine. The seeds are gently fried but not browned in *ghee* or sesame oil and then eight times the weight of the seeds' worth of water is poured into the vessel that is then tightly closed and boiled for a few minutes. The decoction thus obtained is given in one ounce doses for indigestion, flatulent colic and intestinal spasm. The powder may also be given. The oil prepared from the seeds is also beneficial in diarrhea. Crushing the seeds and tying them into a small muslin bag permits them to be sniffed off and on to relieve headache and sinusitis. Seeds are ground with rock salt and the powder thus created is given to invalids or the chronically ill to return proper taste to the mouth and to improve *agni*.

DILL

Systems affected: *rasa*, digestive tract
***Doshas* affected:** decreases *vata* and *kapha*
Properties: anti-spasmodic, relieves gas

A water extract of the seeds is prepared or the oil from the seeds is collected. Both are used mainly in gas, colic and hiccough in children. Bicarbonate of soda is often added to the extract to enhance its activity. The crushed seeds can also be made into a hot infusion. Dill helps establish or augment milk flow in a newly lactating mother and passes out in the milk to assist the baby's digestion.

FENNEL

Systems affected: *rasa*, digestive tract, respiratory tract
***Doshas* affected:** decreases *vata* and *kapha* but does not increase *pitta*
Properties: decongestant, relieves cough and gas, increases breast milk

The oil is best for cough and lung disorders and the decoction to augment milk supply. It is traditionally chewed after meals to pre-

vent gas and discomfort (about one teaspoon of the seeds) and has been used to treat gallstones.

Fenugreek

Systems affected: digestive tract, respiratory tract, skin, nervous system
***Doshas* affected:** decreases *vata* and *kapha*
Properties: tonic, digestive, decongestant, nervine, diaphoretic

The use of fenugreek is to purify breast milk. It is also used for dysentery, for arthritis and for influenza and other feverish, catarrhal respiratory complaints. The seed paste purifies boils and abscesses. It can be used in combination with valerian for insomnia, depression, nerve weakness and neurosis and as a shampoo to prevent premature hair loss. Fenugreek has many uses.

If the sprouts are allowed to develop, they grow into a medicinal vegetable that, when eaten, helps cure indigestion and alleviates liver disorders. Fenugreek eaten daily is excreted in the sweat and makes the body itself repellent to insects.

Henna

Systems affected: skin, nervous system
***Doshas* affected:** decreases *pitta* and *kapha*
Properties: refrigerant, relaxant

As a hair dye or shampoo, it cools the head and brain. Applied as a paste to the soles of the feet in high fever, it cools the body, helps induce sleep and can also alleviate *pitta* headache. Infusion of the flowers is also a headache remedy. Wounds and bruises react favorably to dressing with henna.

Hibiscus

Systems affected: mind, genitourinary system, blood
***Doshas* affected:** decreases *pitta* and *kapha*
Properties: nervine, stops bleeding

Oil prepared with these flowers cools the brain. As a tea, it controls excessive menstrual bleeding, or the fresh flowers may be very lightly fried in *ghee* for the same purpose. Hot infusion of the

flowers relieves cough and fever and irritation in the genitourinary tract. The flowers are said to be aphrodisiac.

JASMINE

Systems affected: skin, mind and nervous system
***Doshas* affected:** balances all three *doshas*
Properties: purifying, invigorating

Tea of the flowers stimulates the sex organs, as does their oil, and is beneficial for skin disorders and some headaches. The leaves are astringent and used for sore throat, ulcers, skin disorders and itches, especially the freshly expressed juice.

JIMSONWEED

Systems affected: nervous system, muscles and joints
***Doshas* affected:** decreases *vata* and *kapha*, increases *pitta*
Properties: anti-inflammatory, anti-spasmodic, poison

The leaves and flowers are used, the seeds being too poisonous. Mainly used externally, its medicinal wine is employed in asthma, cough and shortness of breath. The dried leaves and flowers are smoked to relieve respiratory spasm and expel tenacious mucus. A poultice of the leaves is applied to lumbago, swollen glands and swollen, inflamed joints. The fresh leaves are rubbed on the scalp in cases of patchy loss of hair and to remove crusts of dandruff. Oil prepared from fresh leaf juice is useful in all *vata* diseases.

JUNIPER

Systems affected: urinary tract
***Doshas* affected:** decreases *vata* and *kapha*
Properties: diuretic, tonic

The tea is a diuretic and tonic to the kidneys and therefore has a secondary benefit in heart disease of *kapha* origin.

LOTUS

Systems affected: all *pitta* systems including especially liver and spleen, circulatory system, eyes, brain, skin

***Doshas* affected:** reduces *pitta* and to some extent *kapha*

Properties: cooling, soothing, diuretic

Is used externally and internally in *pitta*-type fever and diarrhea, and in liver diseases, menstrual bleeding disturbances and bleeding piles. A paste of the flower is applied to *pitta* skin diseases. The flower, being mildly diuretic, is a heart tonic.

MYRRH

Systems affected: muscles, *rasa*, reproductive organs (especially female)

***Doshas* affected:** balances all three *doshas*

Properties: decongestant, purifying, rejuvenating

Myrrh can be used in arthritis and other conditions of *ama* in joints and muscles and helps to reduce obesity. Its main usefulness is for the female reproductive system. It expels all *ama* from the female genitals and rejuvenates them. Its *anupana* is honey or strong ginger tea.

PLANTAGO

Systems affected: digestive tract

***Doshas* affected:** reduces *vata* and *pitta*

Properties: demulcent, laxative

The Indian species (*Plantago ovata*) is oval, whereas most psyllium seeds in the west are round. In Ayurveda only the husks and not the whole seeds are used. The husk is light and swells, acting as a bulk laxative, while the seeds are heavy and may create a griping pain. The husks are soaked in water or in *takra,* in cases of diarrhea or dysentery, and in milk in cases of constipation. It tones the organs of elimination and soothes the colon and so is useful in colitis. Because it is heavy, however, overuse leads to dullness of *agni* and so a medicinal wine is always taken along with it, if its use is to be prolonged.

Rhubarb Root

Systems affected: digestive tract, skin and subcutaneous tissues

***Doshas* affected:** decreases *pitta* and *kapha*

Properties: tonic, reduces swelling

Rhubarb root may be used as a laxative either in chronic constipation or in diarrhea and dysentery in which there are copious quantities of *ama* present in the lower bowel or simply large quantities of fluid in the body that must be removed. Paste of the root applied to soft tissue swellings reduces them rapidly.

Rose

Systems affected: digestive tract, mind, eyes

***Doshas* affected:** balances all three *doshas*

Properties: cooling, soothing, balancing. anti-irritant

Rose petals are layered with honey and raw sugar and allowed to sit for two weeks. The resulting preserve is then dissolved in water or milk and taken in the evening before bed as a mild, soothing anti-*pitta* laxative especially for use during the summer months. Rose water, distilled from fresh rose petals, reduces eye irritation when a drop or two is instilled into the eye. Rose oil is said to be cooling and tonic to the sex organs.

Rose Apple

Systems affected: digestive tract, skin

***Doshas* affected:** seed decreases *pitta* and *kapha*; fruit controls all three *doshas*

Properties: anti-diabetic, purifying, invigorating

This tree grows in Florida and Hawaii. Both fruit and seed are beneficial in diabetes. The fruit is also a food and strengthens the power of the blood to carry *prana* to the tissues. The seed powder is taken internally for diabetes and applied externally for chronic ulcers and the like.

SAFFRON

Systems affected: blood stream, female reproductive organs, digestive tract

***Doshas* affected:** balances all three *doshas*

Properties: digestive, sedative, regulates menses, aphrodisiac

Since saffron, the dried stigma of the crocus, is literally a flower's womb, its main functions are connected with the female organs. It controls the menses, relieves painful menstruation and regularizes the cycle. It is useful in frigidity and infertility and, given with calamus root, promotes delivery of the fetus. As a pessary it is inserted to relieve uterine pain. Mental disturbances correlated with menstrual irregularities, such as hysteria, benefit from internal use of saffron consumed in food or crushed in an ounce of warm milk.

SANDALWOOD

Systems affected: mind, skin, blood stream

***Doshas* affected:** balances all three *doshas*

Properties: purifying, cooling, calming

All eruptions respond to paste of sandalwood. Taken internally, the paste or powder removes burning sensations and other *pitta* symptoms and relieves fever. Applied to the forehead and used as incense, it lightens the mind, releasing it from its earthly shackles and concentrating it, which makes it desirable for use during meditation. The oil is used for the same purposes.

SENNA

Systems affected: digestive tract, skin

***Doshas* affected:** decreases *vata* and *kapha*

Properties: laxative, purifying

The leaf is laxative, as is the pod which is stronger and less predictable in action. It is used both in chronic constipation and to purify *pitta* in cases of acne. Externally it is used as a paste over pimples, boils and carbuncles.

Tobacco

Systems affected: nervous system, skin, muscles, bones, joints

***Doshas* affected:** reduces *vata* and *kapha*, prolonged use disturbs all three *doshas*

Properties: purifying, dehydrating, anodyne

The smoke of tobacco blown into an ear arrests earache. It can be used to fumigate a strain or sprain, relieving that pain. A poultice of tobacco and slaked lime quickly draws a felon from a finger or a longer splinter from other body parts. Powdered charcoal of tobacco makes a good toothpowder and limited tobacco use tones the colon. Tobacco poultices can also cautiously be used on swellings.

Valerian

Systems affected: digestive tract, nervous system

***Doshas* affected:** balances all three *doshas*

Properties: digests *ama*, sedative, nervine

As powder or decoction it digests *ama* and acts as a safe and effective sedative. Its smoke has a balancing effect on the mind when used as an incense or fumigation.

Vetiverian

Systems affected: blood stream, skin, genitourinary tract

***Doshas* affected:** reduces *pitta* and *kapha*

Properties: cooling, invigorating, reduces and purifies sweat

Bundles of these long thin roots are soaked in drinking water during the summer heat to medicate it for prevention of *pitta* accumulation. Used internally as the powder, water extract, medicinal wine or decoction, it relieves genitourinary inflammation. Most *pitta* symptoms can be controlled by vetiverian, especially burning sensations. Its fragrance has a cooling effect on the mind and makes it useful in mental disease and it can be used as a rejuvenating tonic to invigorate the body and promote anabolism. In *pitta*-type skin diseases it is often employed as a paste.

Mineral Substances

The use of minerals in medicine dates back to the origins of Ayurveda but the doctrine of metallic treatment was developed in detail by practitioners of Tantra who experimented with alchemy. The by-products of their investigations were incorporated into Ayurveda as medications. Although occasionally unreacted metals are used, most Ayurvedic metallic medication is incinerated to convert the metals into their oxides. A single incineration is usually insufficient and ordinarily 5, 7 or 11 incinerations are performed before the preparation can pass its exams:

- It must produce no smoke or color change when it is added to a flame, to show it has been completely reacted
- It must float on water, to demonstrate its lightness and particle size
- It must fill the lines in the fingertip when touched, to demonstrate particle size

Some preparations require even more incinerations. Mica is never used unless 100 incinerations have been performed, and the best mica is incinerated 1000 times. This potentiates the medicine and makes it more effective, so a smaller dose does a bigger job.

Incineration breaks down the particles of the oxide into smaller and smaller pieces due to the intense heat created. The effect of the oxide, or *bhasma* ("ash"), is due to the subtle form of oxygen it releases to the tissues and also to the action of the tiny metallic particles that circulate in the blood stream and act as catalysts for various body metabolic functions.

Advantages of metallic medications include:

- The older a preparation becomes the more effective it gets since age tends to break the particles into even smaller sizes. Herbal drugs expire when they grow too old.
- The dose of metallic medicine is much smaller than that of herbal preparations and the taste is somewhat neutral rather than being intensely bitter, astringent or pungent.

- It is very simple to prepare a dose of metallic medicine: one simply mixes the oxide with a little honey and licks it. This avoids the time-consuming problems of making decoctions, infusions and the like.
- Metallic medications work faster and more effectively than do herbs and the effect lasts longer in the body since it circulates in the blood stream and cannot be so easily expelled from the body.

Of all metals, mercury is most important in Ayurvedic treatment, but it is extremely toxic unless properly prepared. Since most metals have impurities that can show toxicity, no one should ever prepare or use any metallic medication except under the direct personal supervision of an experienced Ayurvedic physician.

Table 3: Effects of Herbs Common to Both India and America

NAME	*RASA*	*VIRYA*	*VIPAKA*	*DOSHAS AFFECTED*
ANGELICA	Sweet, Pungent	Hot	Sweet	VPK △
ASPARAGUS ROOT	Sweet, Bitter	Hot	Sweet	VPK △, especially VP ↓
BARBERRY	Bitter	Hot	Pungent	PK ↓
BASIL	Pungent, Bitter	Hot	Pungent	VK ↓, P ↑
BAYBERRY	Pungent, Bitter, Astringent	Hot	Pungent	VK ↓, P ↑
BAY LEAF	Pungent, Sweet	Hot	Pungent	VK ↓, P ↑
BERMUDA GRASS	Sweet, Astringent, Bitter	Cold	Sweet	VPK △, especially PK ↓
BOUGAINVILLEA	Bitter, Pungent	Hot	Pungent	VK ↓, P ↑
CANNABIS	Bitter	Hot	Pungent	VK ↓, P ↑
CARAWAY SEEDS	Pungent, Bitter	Hot	Pungent	VK ↓, P ↑
DILL	Pungent, Bitter	Hot	Pungent	VK ↓
FENNEL	Sweet, Pungent, Bitter	Slightly Hot	Sweet	VK ↓
FENUGREEK	Pungent, Bitter	Hot	Pungent	VK ↓
HENNA	Bitter, Astringent	Cold	Pungent	PK ↓
HIBISCUS	Astringent, Sweet	Cold	Pungent	PK ↓
JASMINE	Bitter, Astringent	Hot	Pungent	VPK △

Table 3: Effects of Herbs Common to Both India and America

NAME	*RASA*	*VIRYA*	*VIPAKA*	*DOSHAS AFFECTED*
JIMSONWEED*	Pungent	Hot	Pungent	VK ↓, P ↑
JUNIPER	Pungent, Bitter	Hot	Pungent	VK ↓
LOTUS	Sweet, Astringent, Bitter	Cold	Sweet	PK ↓
MYRRH	Bitter, Pungent, Astringent	Hot	Pungent	VPK △
PLANTAGO	Sweet	Cold	Sweet	VP ↓
RHUBARB ROOT	Bitter, Pungent	Hot	Pungent	PK ↓
ROSE	Bitter, Pungent, Astringent, Sweet	Cold	Sweet	VPK △
ROSE APPLE	Astringent, Sweet, Bitter	Cold	Pungent	VPK △ (Fruit), PK ↓ (Seed)
SAFFRON	Sweet, Pungent	Hot	Sweet	VPK △
SANDALWOOD	Bitter, Sweet, Astringent	Cold	Sweet	VPK △
SENNA	Bitter, Pungent	Hot	Pungent	VK ↓, P ↑
TOBACCO	pungent, Astrin-gent	Hot	Pungent	VK ↓, P ↑
VALERIAN	Bitter, Pungent, Sweet, Astringent	Hot	Pungent	VPK △
VETIVERIAN	Bitter, Sweet	Cold	Pungent	PK ↓

* For external use only; use only the leaves. Can be inhaled through smoking.

Legend: Increases ↑ Decreases ↓ Balances △

LESSON ELEVEN

Lifestyle and Routine

The more routine is one's daily life, the healthier he or she will be.

We live in a fast world. One can circumnavigate the globe in a matter of hours. Telephones can keep us in contact with outer space instantaneously. Our lives are often organized and regulated down to the last second. We live according to the clock; as my teacher Vimalananda used to say, "Americans wear their gods on their wrists." We are obsessed with time and allow time to rule us. Unfortunately we live by an artificial clock, one standardized for the good of society's goals of maximizing efficiency of production. It has no connection with the internal clocks we all possess and by which we are governed.

To fly coast-to-coast is a six hour ordeal, covering four time zones. When you land, you are immediately swept up in the local situation. Your mind can adapt immediately to its changed circumstances, but your body will require at least four days to reset its cycles—its circadian rhythms—so that it can be thoroughly adapted to the new environment. We usually neglect our needs of physical readjustment to new habits. However, since every stress is a potential cause of disease via *dosha* derangement, the

more we assist our bodies in adapting to new conditions, the healthier we will be.

Ideally our lives would be organized so that adaptations would be few and infrequent. The human body, like every other organism, loves routine and thrives when it is fed, exercised and rested regularly. Knowing this, the *rishis* who produced Ayurveda experimented with routines until they determined which habits were best to create and which should be avoided. The full Ayurvedic routine is so detailed that only very few can practice it, since it requires hours of daily preparation. Such detail was included for everyone, so that everyone, no matter what their obligations, could select as much as feasible from the texts and create their own routines to fit their own needs and aims. The more the routine, the healthier the individual.

The Purpose of the Daily Routine: The Three Pillars of Life

Most human beings live to accumulate possessions and to fulfill desires. The more perceptive ones attempt to follow the duties assigned to them by their social situation and a few aim beyond the mundane to attempt to understand the meaning of life. Ayurveda suggests that a well-balanced individual should accept all four of these goals as appropriate to one's natural tendencies. Neglect of any one will result in an imbalanced individual; imbalance means disease. These four goals are called the *Purusharthas*, or Human Aims:

- To accept appropriate social and cultural responsibility in one's society
- To accumulate possessions by lawful means
- To fulfill legitimate desires which do not result in the sufferings of others
- To reduce one's inherent delusion about the true meaning and nature of life and the purpose of embodied human existence.

These aims can only be filled by healthy individuals. Even if one desires to live a life of unbridled indulgence in sense pleasures or a life of spiritual asceticism, a sound mind in a sound body is essential.

Of all aspects of life, three are surpassingly important to existence. They are food, sleep and sex, termed the Three Pillars of Life. Just as strong pillars support a building, food, sleep and sex support the individual. If the foundation pillars weaken, the building may collapse; likewise, improper indulgence in food, sleep and sex invites an early and unpleasant doom.

The entire physical routine is a process of purification of the body and mind prior to eating. It includes other uses of the sense organs to encourage good digestion to provide the energy we need to live and love. The briefest possible healthy scenario would include:

- Arising before dawn
- Urination and defecation, to empty the digestive tract so that it has space to take in new nourishment
- Washing of the hands, feet, face, mouth, eyes and nose (all the sense organs) to purify them to accurately perceive all sense objects
- Quiet solitary moments of contemplation on Nature or one's own deity
- Light self-massage followed by exercise and then a bath
- Breakfast and the rest of the day

But because there are many significant details that some individuals may be able to make good use of in their own daily routines, it is appropriate to study the Ayurvedic routine thoroughly.[1]

Waking

It is always wise to arise before sunrise because:

- The last third of the night is ruled by *vata*. *Vata*-type sleep is characterized by vivid, often disturbing dreams and by unsound sleep that prevents full rest and colors our perceptions of reality for the rest of the day. If one is awake and

1. See Chapter X, "Lifestyles and Routine," *Ayurveda, The Science of Self-Healing*.

meditating at this time this disturbance to the mind is minimized.

- Time periods ruled by *vata*—daybreak, sunset, seasonal junctions—are optimal for meditation because *prana* is most easily controlled during such periods. Greater spiritual advancement can thus be achieved. Moreover a meditative, reverential attitude is essential for appreciation of the process about to take place: the renewal of life on earth as the sun returns its energy to us. Reverence to the Giver of Life is appropriate at dawn.
- Because *vata* encourages excretion when it is balanced, use should be made of the *vata* time of night to encourage thorough evacuation of bowels and bladder, which will assist in removing mental wastes as well.
- Since disease originates at the confluence of time cycles and sunrise is the confluence or junction between the periods of *vata* and *kapha*, arising and moving about helps prevent increase in *kapha* both in body and in mind. This is the dullness that occurs when one awakes late and the body seems unable to synchronize itself with the mind all day long.

Sleep is a kind of death. Each day is a new day, a blank slate on which experience can be written. Each sunrise marks a fresh opportunity for growth in new directions. A deep-felt reverence for life and a sincere desire to improve the quality of our lives should make us enthusiastic about rising early and marveling over the miracle of existence.

Voiding of Wastes

It is best to defecate daily though some people develop a routine which is less frequent. Some authorities believe that the bowels should be emptied twice a day; three bowel movements or more daily is definitely too much and will weaken the organism, encouraging increase in *vata*. A few suggestions for creating a daily early-morning habit of defecation:

1. Store water overnight in a copper vessel and drink a glass or two immediately upon arising. Copper acts to scrape *ama* and other toxins from the inside of the intestine. Alternatively raisins or dried figs can be soaked overnight and the water drunk and the fruit slowly chewed in the morning.
2. Squat on the ground with your knees near your chest and perform *ashwini mudra*, the Mare Posture. Contract and relax the muscles around the anus just as a mare does after she passes her dung. Five or ten minutes will suffice.
3. Do not read or worry or otherwise occupy your mind while sitting. Keep the mind occupied with a *mantra* or song or any other pleasant sound to prevent the chaotic tendencies of *vata* that reinforce constipation.
4. Wait patiently. Go daily and sit at the same time each day for five or ten minutes to create the habit. It may take thirty days or more to do so.
5. Never strain at stools and do not ever suppress the desire to defecate, no matter at what time it comes, lest *vata* be disturbed.

Other considerations for defecation: it is better to use water rather than toilet paper to clean the anus since it cleans better, is less irritating and the flow of water over the skin will calm the nerves in the area. It is good to clench the teeth whenever passing either urine or feces. The bones, including the teeth, are repositories of *vata* and the downward movement of *apana* can loosen the teeth. Clenching them during the movement of *apana* keeps them tight in the jaw.

Cleaning the Mouth

Food digests properly only when its taste is accurately perceived by the brain and mind. To ensure this, the tongue must be scraped daily with a silver teaspoon or tongue scraper from back to front slowly, five to ten times. Then it is wise to initiate the gag reflex with the finger to bring up whatever mucus is trapped in the throat. Tooth powder should be used to clean the teeth and massage the gums. Toothbrushing must

be done lightly to avoid damage to teeth and gums. Occasionally gargling with salt water tones the gums and throat.

Cleaning the Eyes

Ayurveda prescribes that one should take a mouthful of water and hold it until the lips begin to quiver and tears start from the eyes. Some of this water is then emptied into the right hand and cupped over the right eye. The head is tipped backward so that the water covers the eye and then the eye is opened and washes itself. The left eye is washed in the same way.

This method causes the mouth to salivate, which purifies the salivary glands. It also brings the water temperature up to body temperature to prevent shock to the eyes. Saliva is good for the eyes; applied to styes, saliva makes them regress quickly.

Once a week eye drops should be instilled into the eyes as a purification. Barberry is especially good to expel excess *kapha*. Other substances include castor oil, honey and *triphala*. Rose water helps relieve inflammation and irritation. Even better is to take a crystal of alum and heat it in an aluminum spoon until it puffs up. Then add water to the spoon and heat until the crystal partially dissolves in the water. Cool and apply one or two drops into the eyes.

Culture of the Eyes

Just as food for the digestive tract is selected from various fruits, vegetables, grains, beans and the like, the eye selects its food from colors. Gold is the color most nutritious for eye and brain. One nourishes the eye with gold by staring fixedly at an appropriate object such as:

- A piece of bright, burnished gold
- A vessel of cow's *ghee*
- The rising sun, just as it comes over the horizon, for five minutes
- The flame of a *ghee* lamp at arm's length and eye level, for

ten minutes. The soot collected from the *ghee* lamp can be applied to the lower eyelid's edge to reduce eyestrain.

- If none of the above is available, one can visualize a brilliant golden orb and generate golden rays internally.

Cleaning the Nose

Daily application of oil into the nose controls *vata* and nourishes the brain. Oils medicated with calamus or gotu kola work well. From time to time the accumulated *kapha* in the nasal passages should be eliminated by use of medicated snuff or by Yogic nose cleaning with salt water or waxed string. Some snort water from the hollow of the right palm into each nostril each morning and then blow it out again gently, to prevent any damage to the delicate nasal tissues.

Cleaning the Ears

The ears are best cleaned by periodic instillation of a drop or two of medicated oil into the ear canal.

Massage

After cleaning the tongue, eyes, nose and ears, the only sense organ remaining for purification is the skin. The skin and the digestive canal both contain *pitta* and are both digestive organs, so they are intimately interconnected with one another. In fact they are the boundaries or barriers between the organism and its external environment: anything that goes into the organism must pass through one of these two barriers. The entire set of morning ablutions leads up to eating, an act that is, in a sense, a sacrament. It is a sacrificial offering of foodstuffs into the digestive fire, which is a form of the cosmic *agni*. Harmonization of the skin will tend to make the digestive tract function more harmoniously.

The benefits of an oil massage:

- It produces softness and unctuousness of the skin
- Its rhythmic motion encourages free and rhythmic movements of the joints and muscles and alleviates their stiffness

- It controls *vata* by reducing *vata's* dryness, lightness, roughness and erratic nature
- Acting as a passive form of exercise, it increases the circulation of the blood that warms the body and encourages quicker removal of metabolic wastes through the skin.
- It relaxes the body prior to vigorous exercise

Since it is generally not feasible to be massaged daily by a professional, a spouse or friend may cooperate or one may resort to self-application of oil. It is best to use an oil from a locally available plant or seed and the selection of the oil should be made according to season—using hot oils in the winter like mustard or sesame and cool oils in the summer like coconut or olive, to climate—using wet oils like castor in a dry climate and dry oils like safflower in a wet climate, and to individual constitution.

It is always best to follow the flow of energy in the body so that *vata* will not be diverted from its normal direction. Practically this means to work in the direction in which the hairs grow. Since daily massage is to help remove wastes from the *dhatus* and return them to the gut for disposal, it is best to move from the extremities toward the trunk and from outward inward. A little oil should always be applied over the body's vital parts such as the heart, navel, genitals, joints and anus and any sense organs which might not have been oiled yet, and should be applied over all hairy areas: the armpits, pubes, chest and especially the head.

If one has no time to massage the entire body, massaging the soles of the feet and the scalp with sesame oil will relax the entire body.

Since the skin contains *pitta* and is a digestive organ, no indigestible oil, such as mineral oil, or any oil with artificial flavor, color or odor, should ever be applied to it. Application of oil to any hairy area, and especially to the head hair, promotes nutrition of *asthi*, a repository of *vata*. If conditions preclude whole-body massage, at minimum the sense organs, head hair, feet and great toe nails should be oiled at least once a week. Oil massage of the feet prevents cracking

of the skin, eliminates inflammation, cures numbness and promotes sound sleep. Oil massage of the head prevents hair loss, relaxes the brain and the body and strengthens the sense organs.

Conditions in which massage is contraindicated include:

- Excessive *kapha* in the body which would be further increased by oil
- Most acute diseases, especially fevers, in which oil will further augment *ama* and increase obstruction

Sandalwood oil is perhaps the best of all medicinal oils since it increases *sattva* in the mind and promotes meditation when applied to the forehead.

Exercise

Exercise may be passive like massage or active like yoga or calisthenics. The benefits of exercise include:

- Increases the organism's stamina and resistance to disease
- Cleans and clears all *srotamsi,* subtle as well as gross. The more physical and chaotic the exercise, the better the effect on body channels. Subtle exercise like yoga is best for subtle channels.
- Promotes circulation thus excretion of wastes. Makes the lungs more efficient so more *prana* as well as oxygen can get to the *dhatus*.
- Destroys fat. Chaotic exercise increases *vata* eventually but patterned exercise controls *vata* while reducing *kapha*. Patterned exercise can be made into a meditation.

Vata people require meditative exercise because they have plenty of chaotic mental energy. The more vigorous the exercise, the more vigorously the mind will function afterward. Extreme exertion temporarily dulls the mind by exhausting the body and the mind rebounds to greater activity as the body recovers. Vigorous exercise is best for *kapha* people who require more mental activity and can better withstand the physical strains.

In general the more vigorous the exercise, the more the need for physical food to replace what was lost and for energy to digest the extra food. Since this energy is obtained at the expense of the mind, which also requires much energy to function, the mind will become duller as the physical exertion increases.

Whatever the form of exercise, no one should ever exceed his or her capacity while performing it. Exercise is meant to increase the energy available to the body, which means that to take exercise to the point of physical exhaustion is to negate most of its benefits. Since everyone's capacity differs, Ayurveda says that you have exercised enough to boost your circulation sufficiently to clear cellular wastes once sweat appears on your forehead. Any exercise you do past that point is no longer merely for maintenance of health but is either for building up the body or wearing down the mind. If one over-exercises, *prana* will be hyperactivated resulting in the drying out of *ojas*. This in turn affects the autoimmune mechanism.

Ayurveda states that during the winter season you must exercise only up to one-half of your capacity, i.e., until one starts sweating on the forehead and armpit. If, for example, you swim and know you would be exhausted after one hour of solid swimming you should never exercise more than half an hour at a time. In the summer one should exercise less since one's energy is dissipated faster.

One of the best exercises is simple walking, which tones the bowels, relaxes the body, promotes digestion and preserves mental clarity. Swimming makes all the body's muscles more efficient and balanced and helps control the breathing, if it is not too vigorous. Proper breathing is a part of proper exercise, as in *Yoga*. Perhaps the best form of exercise is the *surya namaskara* or Sun Salutation.[1] My teacher Vimalananda used to say that if one ignored all other rules of routine one should:

1. See Figure One, p. 11 - 134 and p. 11 - 13 and the yoga *asanas*, pp. 113-122 in *Ayurveda, The Science of Self-Healing*.

Keep the bowels moving (keep the colon clean)
Keep the body moving (exercising)
Keep the breath moving (breathing right)

Even if you cannot perform detailed purifications, emptying of the colon will preserve the purity of most of the rest of the body. Even if you do only five to ten minutes of exercise daily, it should be done each day at the same time. And even if you do not perform *pranayama*, deep abdominal breathing will provide you with enough oxygen and *prana* to stay healthy. [1]

Contraindications of exercise include:

- *Vata* diseases like chronic cough or related respiratory ailments
- *Pitta* diseases such as blood disorders and severe inflammations
- Severe indigestion
- The very old and the very young

The crest jewel of Yogic exercise is the "Salute to the Sun" or *surya namaskara.* This is a group of Yogic postures associated with rhythmic breathing and with repetition of *mantras* (specialized sound patterns) that salutes the force which brings life to the earth. Much more than a physical exercise, it is a physical-mental-spiritual practice that is a meditation in itself and harmonizes the entire existence.

Bathing

Ayurveda advises warm water baths; Yoga suggests the use of cold water. Warm water causes the body to cool itself after a half-hour or so because of the law of action and reaction; likewise a cold shower now will make you feel warm within a few minutes. Modern conditions suggest that perhaps it is best to shower or bathe in warm water and then rinse at the end with cold to enjoy the benefits of both effects. This encompasses the sensuous embrace of the warm and the

1. See *Pranayama,* p. 114, *Ayurveda, The Science of Self-Healing.*

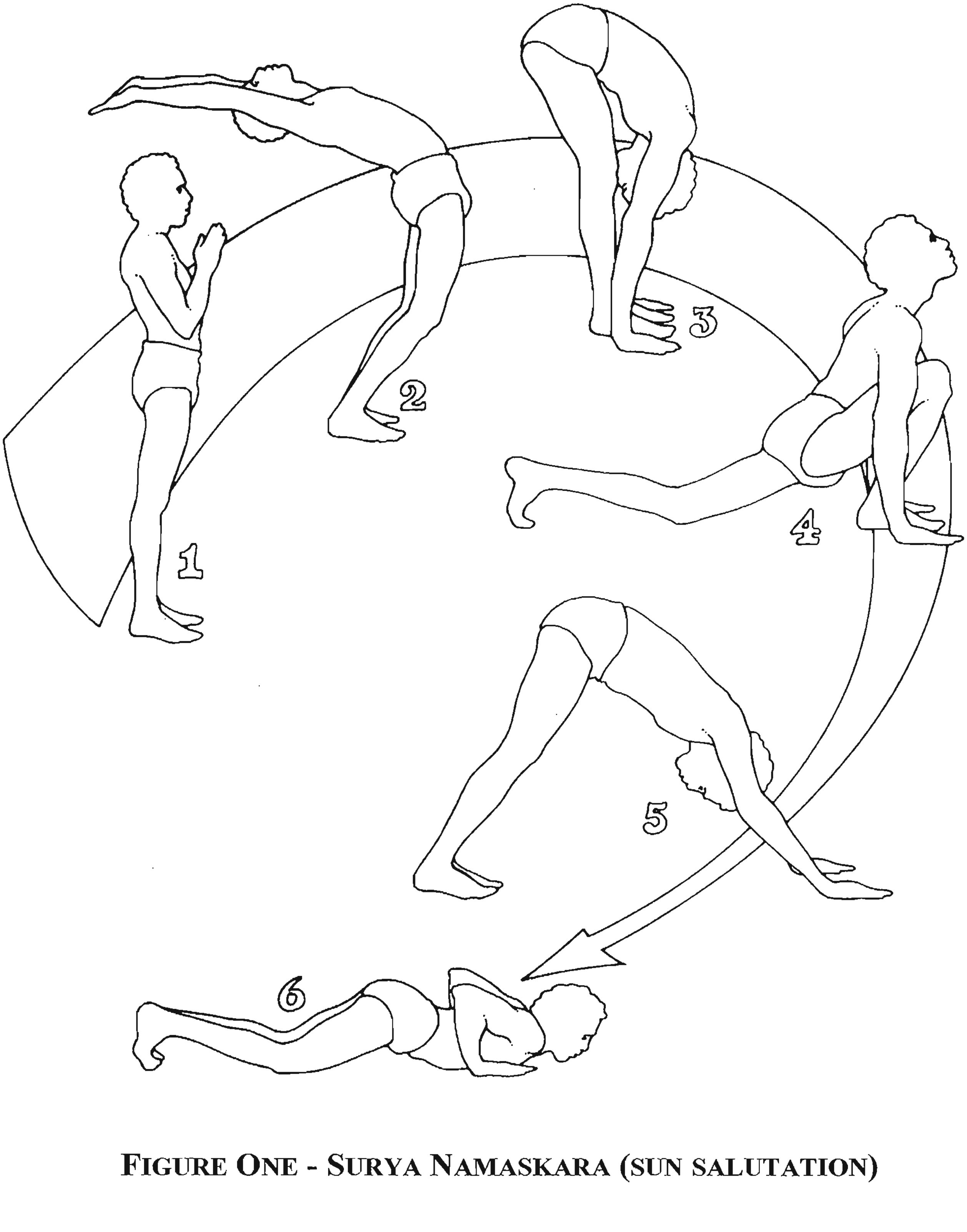
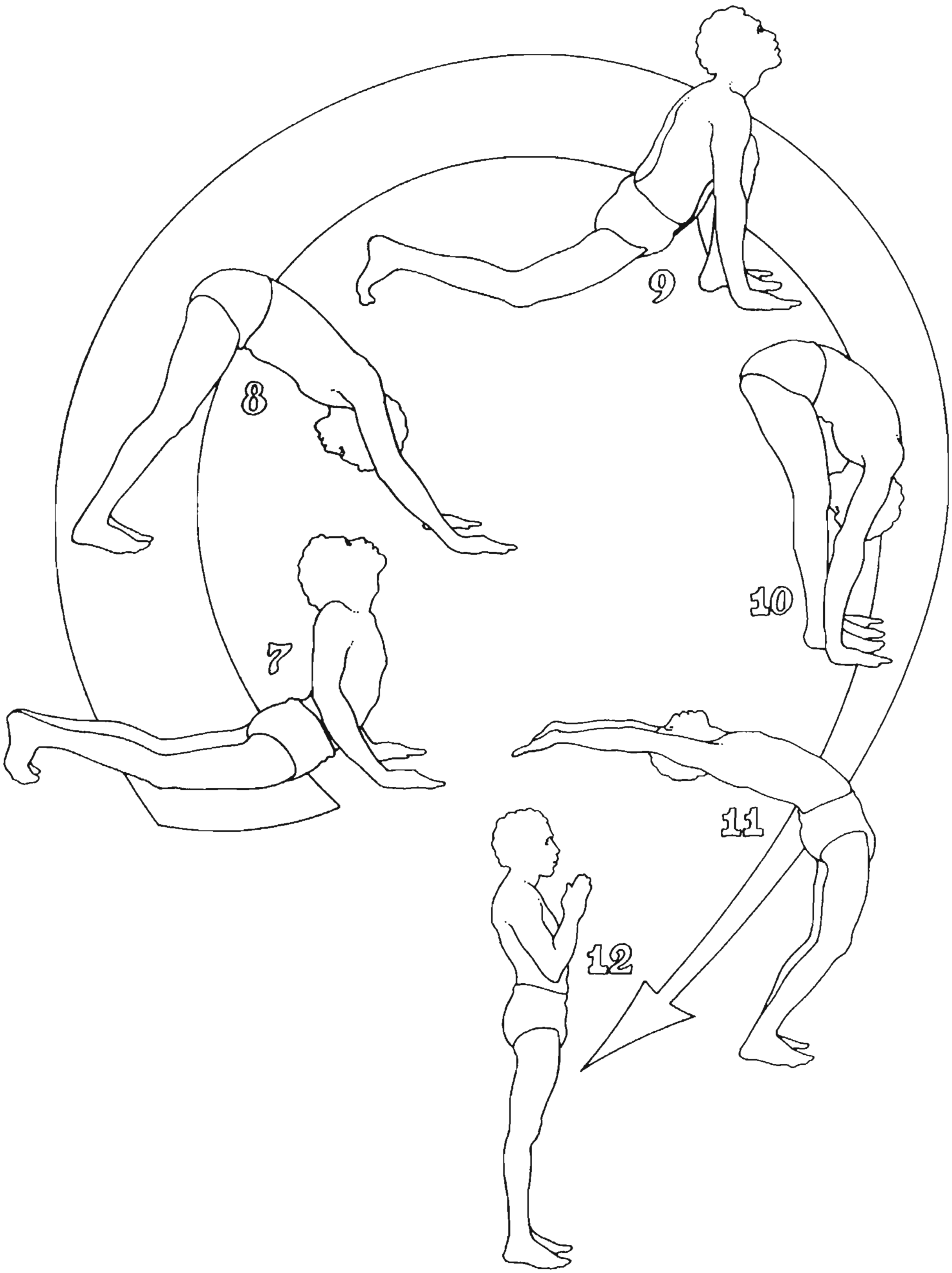


Figure One - Surya Namaskara (sun salutation)


7
8
9
10
11
12

invigoration of the cold, which also closes the pores to prevent dirt from immediately reentering them.

Ayurveda and Yoga agree however that hot water should not be applied directly to the head, which drains strength from the sense organs. Warm water is sufficient for the head. Nor should soap be used except in case of real grime, and soap should especially be avoided around mucous membranes (lips, anus, nipples, etc.) which can be cleaned with a cream. Optimally soap should be replaced by clay, chick-pea flour or barley flour which will soak up the oil left after the massage and will purify and tone the skin without drying it or leaving a film behind as soap does.

Bathing should never be performed after eating. One should wait for at least an hour, since it causes blood and energy to flow to the skin when they are needed in the gut to deal with the food. Temporary prohibitions for the bath include: diarrhea, distention, chronic cold, indigestion and most acute diseases.

Bathing is meant to increase the digestive *agni*. Besides the physical bath, a mental bath should be performed simultaneously to ignite and inflame the mental digestive fires. While in India this takes the form of *mantras* and prayers, any hymn or, in fact, any song or chant that makes for a satisfied mind will make for a satisfying meal.

Clothing

Wearing apparel should be clean, light and airy, preferably of natural fiber and should belong to the wearer. Clothing, footwear or flowers owned or worn by someone else will have picked up their owner's innate personality "vibrations" that will clash with one's own subtle body. The single exception is the clothing, flowers or footwear of a spiritually advanced being which will make you more harmonious if you wear them.

Indian priests use silk clothes during ritual worship since silk insulates the wearer against external influences too subtle to block

otherwise. Rubber footwear affects the eyes adversely. Yogis avoid leather footwear and use wooden sandals instead. Going barefoot as often as possible, especially when inside the house, is desirable.

Body ornamentation can include flowers. These satisfy the nose with their sweet odors, provide beautiful colors for the eyes and offer a cool touch to the skin. Flowers, like rose and lotus, make the mind calm and poised; jasmine and magnolia are among those flowers that enhance sensuality; and narcotics such as poppy or jimsonweed act as soporifics. Other ornamentation such as jewels and precious metals should be worn according to one's constitution.

Other Considerations

Each individual should select employment that is appropriate for the *prakruti*. For example, *vata* people who have plenty of uncontrolled creative energy require continuous supervision to demonstrate their potential. They are good at theorizing and are capable of great original thinking but often fail to follow up systematically on what they discover. *Pitta* people are incisive and are often successful at determining how to put ideas into action. *Kapha* people are good at administration and make their departments run smoothly.

Spare time during the day should be spent with elders, say the texts on Ayurveda. An elder is anyone, regardless of age, who shows greater maturity than you do. Any companion should be evaluated as to his or her desirability as a friend according to how carefully they avoid the Ten Enemies of the Human Being:

The Three Physical Enemies:

1. Taking the life of another being
2. Theft: of things or ideas
3. Going where one ought not go

The Four Spoken Enemies:

1. Speaking untruth
2. Schismatic words which divide friends or families from one another
3. Sarcasm and cutting remarks
4. Incoherent speech

The Three Mental Enemies:

1. Covetousness
2. Malice
3. Perversion in thought, word or deed

One takes in as nutrients for one's mind all the qualities of one's companions, and the better are those qualities the better the mind will be cultivated.

In general it is best to live with circumspection. There are two rules for preserving propriety in behavior:

- Do not behave rashly with your hands, feet, eyes, words, genital organs or belly.
- Do not invite anyone to lift an eyebrow or a hand at you for sneezing, belching, coughing, sleeping, eating, copulating or farting in an improper way.

Sleep

The bulk of the day is spent in employment and leisure. Sleep, one of the Three Pillars of Life, is inevitable, the "little death" that temporarily pries us free from attachment to our personalities and replaces us in the Mother's womb. Of the seven types of sleep only one is natural and healthful. These seven types include sleep that is:

- Due to *tamas*, mental inertia
- Due to excess *kapha*
- Due to total mental fatigue
- Due to physical exhaustion
- Without any obvious cause; a bad prognostic sign
- A complication of an acute disease

- Normal sleep due to disengagement of the mind from the outward-pointed senses

Healthy sleep is referred to as the "World's Wet-Nurse" both because sleep is motherly in its ministrations to us and because sleep naturally increases *kapha*, which is in charge of the organism's "wetness." This is why it is ordinarily forbidden to sleep during the day. Individuals who are permitted to sleep during the day include:

- Students who overstudy, entertainers (like singers)
- Those who are exhausted from overwork, travel or staying awake all night
- The young, the old and the weak
- Those who overindulge in sex or intoxicants, especially alcohol
- Those who exhaust themselves through anger, sorrow or fear
- Patients of excessive thirst, diarrhea, colicky abdominal pain, asthma, hiccough, consumption or cavitation in the lungs.

In the case of acute indigestion, one can sleep in the afternoon but only before eating. In the summer and in other dry seasons when *vata* is increased and nights are short, afternoon sleep is permitted except for the following: the obese, sufferers from *kapha* diseases, those who eat too many *kapha*-causing foods and anyone who is full of *ama*. Just as day sleep—other than a ten to fifteen minute catnap—increases *kapha*, nocturnal vigils increase *vata* and decrease *kapha*.

Guidelines for Restful Sleep

1) Body Position—sitting up is best. If you lie down, head position is important:
   a. Head into the east (with feet pointed west): restful meditative sleep, because the head is pointed in the sun's direction.
   b. Head into the south: excellent for health. The magnetic lines of force of the earth draws energy into the body and stabilizes it there.
   c. Head into the west: promotes disturbing dreams. The feet

are pointed in the sun's direction, and there is a close connection between the feet and one's dreams.

d. Head into the north: good for corpses. In India corpses are laid out with their heads into the north to hasten decomposition and to prevent the departed soul or some wandering spirit from entering or re-entering the body. The magnetic lines of force draw the energy out of the body through the head.

e. Sleeping on the left side increases the solar energy and enflames sensual desire. Sleeping on the right side increases the lunar energy and produces more restful and alert sleep. Sleeping on the back enhances *vata* and disturbs the mind/body coordination, sometimes resulting in diseases.

2) The height of the bed should be equal to the height of the sleeper's knee.

3) The room should always be clean, well-ventilated and silent; the nightclothes should be clean and loose.

4) One should complete one's physical and mental digestion before sleeping; no eating or serious thinking or reading for two hours before sleep.

5) Always meditate before sleep after washing the hands, feet and face. The feet should be gently massaged with a little oil.

6) Never sleep in the kitchen or any other place where food is prepared.

7) Go to bed only to sleep and get up immediately upon waking.

Insomnia

Causes:

- Too vigorous pursuit of purifications, fasting or exercise, and oversmoking; this aggravates *vata* and activates the mind
- Emotions like fear, worry and anger
- An improper bed

Treatments:

- Oil massage, warm bath, heavy food, wine, happy surroundings
- *Netra tarpana*, which involves submersion of the eyes in oil
- Pastes of sandalwood, saffron and other aromatic substances such as valerian applied to the forehead
- Meditation

Convalescent patients require more sleep than normal and practitioners of Yoga require less, since their relaxation is more perfect. The Yogic ideal is called *Yoga Nidra*, a state of complete physical inertia with retention of mental awareness. The more perfect the dissociation from the body, the more efficiently the mind can prepare itself for its new incarnation which begins with dawn, when the routine begins again.

LESSON TWELVE

Rejuvenation and Virilization

Rasayana is like nectar beneficial for the gods, having incomprehesible miraculous effects. It promotes long life, provides health and sustains youthfulness.

The purpose of life is the fulfillment of legitimate desires, for which a healthy body and mind are essential. Ayurveda's aim is to guide the individual through disease past health into rejuvenation, a state beyond health. Old age is a disease. Ayurveda believes in the possibility of physical immortality and the feasibility of retaining one's youth until one's demise. The key to immortality is to take in *prana* directly from the atmosphere without any need for food, to convert it via *tejas* into a form that can nourish the body and to send it via *ojas* into the body.

Indulgence in sensory pleasures results in wear and tear of the body, which causes destruction of *ojas*. Without *ojas* to protect us we age, inevitably. Ayurveda teaches the doctrine of *rasayana*, literally the Path of *Rasa*, as a means of creating, as far as possible, all the tastes within the body so that there will be autonomy over existence and control over the aging process. As we have seen, *ojas* is the end product of proper digestion, nutrition and assimilation, and is also the cause of good digestion, nutrition and assimilation. So, it is really the beginning and the end of *rasa* in the body.

Ojas is associated with the secretions of the pineal gland and produces the body's aura. Just as an electric current passing through a wire produces a magnetic field in the space around it, the *ojas* produces the aura in the space surrounding the body. A healthy aura means resistance to disease; the weaker the aura, the greater the influence from external influences and the swifter the aging process progresses.

Since *ojas* is nourished from *shukra* and *artava*, the male and female sexual secretions, excessive, uncontrolled or perverse sexual activity will deplete the *ojas*, ruin the aura and eliminate that luster you find on the face and body of a truly healthy person. Therefore rejuvenation must be coupled with virilization. Whatever *ojas* is lost through the sex act must be replaced if the aging process is to be arrested.

Ayurveda, *Yoga* and Tantra diverge in their attitudes to sex. Ayurveda believes in the legitimate enjoyment of sensual pleasures, as long as they do not cause disease, and mandates that one should not enjoy sex more often than four times a month, and even less in the hot seasons and when *vata* predominates in the climate. This frequency will permit enjoyment and still not excessively reduce *ojas*.

Yogis credit their long, healthy lives to the practice of celibacy. A dedicated *yogi* will only enjoy sex with the spouse, and will only indulge once a month or less since *Yoga* teaches restraint of the sense organs from turning outside to their objects. Tantra uses sexual rituals as a method of meditation. Some Tantric sexual practices can even increase *ojas*, but these practices are not orgies and require severe penances and conditioning of the mind before they can be used.

Whether one advocates the Ayurvedic, Yogic or Tantric approach to sex, the concern for preservation of *ojas* is the same. Rejuvenation for other parts of the body often needs to be done only once in the lifetime and will have a lasting effect, but virilization must be repeated often since body substance and energy is continually being expended through the sex act.

Virilization is not only the science of aphrodisiacs, substances that increase sexual desire, but is also the study of how to maximize sexual pleasure and how to treat infertility. Rejuvenation is good for the individual organism, but virilization is also concerned with the next generation, to keep the progression unbroken. Since the mood of the partners who copulate is important in determining the child's *prakruti*, it behooves them to become as ecstatic as possible so that their exultation can be transmitted to their progeny.

There are many degrees of rejuvenation. Total rejuvenation can be achieved only by one whose senses are so well controlled that all the rejuvenative energy goes for that purpose. Westerners are not yet so disciplined but can benefit from partial rejuvenations that produce improved functioning of the body's physiology in general and also return youthful vigor to specific organ systems. Aging can be retarded if one is willing to follow the rules.

The Two Types of Rejuvenation

The two types of rejuvenation are by substance plus discipline and by discipline alone.

People who follow the method of discipline alone must bind themselves to truthfulness and to equanimity in all circumstances. Alcohol and other intoxicants must be avoided and anger and all other destabilizing emotions eliminated. There must be no strain whatsoever on either body or mind. Our world is full of stressful situations today but, by strenuous practice of non-attachment, one can go beyond stress and merely accept life as it comes. Individuals who can follow these rules strictly should restrict themselves to the sweet taste in their diets, including especially fresh cow's milk and fresh cow's *ghee* with honey. These three substances possess the power of rejuvenation when consumed under strict regulation.

If one cannot follow strict discipline while remaining in the world, it is better to go on a retreat from the world for some time and consume a rejuvenating substance along with an appropriate diet.

Ideally one should be completely isolated in a hut where no wind or sun will penetrate, avoiding all human contact for the period of the treatment. This permits complete relaxation and rest of the sense organs and the body and the strict routine of the discipline invigorates the organism. Before such a retreat, full purification with emesis, purgation, enema and *nasya* must be performed.

Since most people will never have the opportunity to experience such a strict retreat, they will be unable to take the strongest rejuvenation substances which can be dangerous when taken without complete supervision. Some simple *rasayana* substances that will benefit whoever takes them are:

- Black pepper—some *yogis* take seven black pepper corns and crush them early in the morning. This powder is then mixed with honey and the paste is licked early in the morning, the appropriate time to take any rejuvenating medicine. *Yogis* like black pepper since it not only creates stronger *agni* but, because of its drying action, it helps to dry the reproductive secretions and so helps preserve celibacy.
- Black sesame seeds—available from Indian grocery stores; only the black seeds are truly *rasayana*. One ounce of these powdered seeds are to be consumed daily mixed with the powders of asparagus root, ginger and raw sugar.
- Chickpeas or Garbanzo Beans—one handful of these peas is soaked overnight in water and next morning the peas are slowly chewed and swallowed and then the water is drunk. This is a good method for choosing the dose of the *rasayana* since every person's handful differs according to body size.
- Licorice Root—some authorities advise its consumption twice a day, heated gently in milk.
- Long Pepper—a close relative of black pepper but aphrodisiac instead of calmative, long pepper powder may be mixed with honey and washed down with fresh milk. Or whole peppers may be boiled in milk and the milk drunk.

- Pomegranate—pomegranate juice is carefully evaporated into a thick syrup. Daily two teaspoons of the syrup are mixed with one gold leaf and one silver leaf. This mixture is made into a ball and consumed with fresh milk.
- *Triphala*—the powder is consumed with milk or with honey twice daily. One method involves application of *triphala* paste to a cast iron plate or pan. After twenty-four hours it is removed and consumed, one teaspoon at a time, with a glass of honey dissolved in water as an *anupana*.

Restrictions for this sort of *rasayana* are less stringent than for more detailed forms. However, the more closely one follows the restrictions, the better the result will be. Salt must be eliminated from the diet; all tastes other than sweet must be minimized, especially sour. Sleep must be regulated and sex is banned during this period. One should not travel extensively during the treatment and should engage in mild exercise, avoiding loud speech, violent behavior and any other activities that might disturb *vata*. The more the individual meditates, the more efficient the process will be.

Avoiding anything that reduces body *ojas* is important. Common causes of lack of *ojas* are identical with causes for increased *vata*: overexertion, excessive fasting, worry, dry food, too much sunbathing or windbathing, fear, sorrow, late nights, excessive elimination of *kapha*, blood, reproductive fluids or wastes, the six-month period between March 21 and September 21, and all mental diseases.

Virilization

Just as for rejuvenation, full purification must precede virilization. Moreover, care must be taken to ensure good genital hygiene. Smegma should be removed daily if the male is uncircumcised, and the female is helped by a monthly douche with yogurt and turmeric in water. Virilization for nourishment of the parts with an aim to creating healthy children requires at least forty days and

must be repeated as necessary. Virilization for excitation usually requires a minimum of three weeks. Some virilizaters include:

- Dates—a few dates heated with a cup of milk three times a day encourages the easy flow of semen from the body and strengthens the female organs as well.
- Cannabis, nutmeg and clove—cannabis and nutmeg are narcotic and clove is anesthetic. All inhibit the excitation process so that the period of excitement can be prolonged. They should be taken with milk and honey.
- Applications of medicated oils to the penis—prevent *vata* disturbances and promote quick recovery from orgasm.
- Animal substances—according to the principle "like increases like," portions of the reproductive system of animals will virilize.
- Gold—equal parts of milk and water are simmered with a gold leaf. When the mixture is boiled down to half its original volume the gold leaf is removed and *ghee*, honey and raw sugar are added in the proportions 2:1:1 for nutritive virilization and 1:2:1 for excitation. Or, the gold may be repeatedly quenched in the simmering mixture until it is reduced to one-half its volume.
- Long pepper—long pepper powder is mixed with sesame oil and cow's *ghee* and the mixture is consumed with milk, raw sugar and honey, and then rice with *ghee* is consumed thereafter.
- Asparagus root—used with *ghee*, milk, raw sugar, long pepper and honey.
- Licorice root—taken with *ghee*, honey and milk.

Rules for Sexual Activity

When to avoid sex:

- Immediately after food

- During any acute disease or during convalescence from the disease
- During the day

Preparations for sex:

- Bathe or shower beforehand and wear clean, sweet-smelling bed clothes
- Employ fragrance on the person and in the room
- Delicious, nutritious food with a small quantity of refreshing wine
- Music or other sweet noises
- Ample use of flowers. These are the plants' sex organs.
- An appropriate lunar day; never on the new moon night; the best night is that of the full moon
- Above all, a carefree heart

The above list was taken from the ancient writer Sushruta, who realized that it is only via the process of *yukti*, the coming together of many influences, that a certain effect is created.

Sexual Positions

The positions during copulation depend upon the desired result. Tantra recognizes 84 positions for meditative activity. For creating pregnancy, Ayurveda suggests the male-on-top position. If the woman lies on her left side the *pitta* will increase, making it easier for the womb to flush out the zygote in the next menstrual cycle. Should she lie on her right side, *kapha* will increase, which will plug up the channels and obstruct the sperm in its movement toward the ovum. Lying on the stomach prevents easy movement of the sperm and ovum toward one another because of obstruction to *vata* when both nostrils are compressed. Therefore, for conception, the female should lie on her back.

The male must pay close attention to his breathing during sex. Women are said to be nine times more passionate than men since their orgasms are multiple and a man's is only single. So the male must

retard his orgasm as long as possible to ensure adequate satisfaction for his partner. The faster the breathing the sooner the ejaculation will occur, so that *pranayama* or other breath control is appropriate to control this response.

After Sex

Because sex depletes both the energy and the substance of the body, it causes increase of *vata* which must be nullified.

Procedures include:

- Cleansing the body—a hot bath or shower should be taken to return heat to the body, or at least the feet, face, hands, armpits and pubes should be washed. Both sexes should urinate.
- Mild exercise—especially *asanas* to soothe the nerves and bring *vata* under control.
- Nutrition—food is essential. The best item is hot milk mixed with saffron and almonds or hot milk mixed with peanuts, turmeric and ginger. Nutmeg and cinnamon are also sometimes used.
- Sleep—the *kapha* inherent in sleep will soothe the nerves and promote regeneration of *ojas*.

Sexual Maladjustment

Ojas is destroyed by all stresses. Sex is a stress, and frequent sex leads to continuous loss of *ojas*, which in turn leads to frenetic, frantic interest in more sex, leading to frustration and misery. The repetitious performance of unsatisifying sex leads to disease. Due to the pace of the modern world, sex has moved from the realm of the unhurried to the scheduled. When a couple does not take enough time to enjoy sex properly, achieving both satisfaction and satiation is impossible, leading to dissatisfaction. Indian tradition states that it is the male's responsibility to ensure that the female is completely satisfied. Thus a woman has a right to become angry if her male neglects her satisfaction. Unfortunately such a reaction affects the body. This anger may lead to hatred and jealousy, which affects *pitta*, overheats the blood and results in menstrual disturbances.

Dissatisfaction is rampant because the vast majority of sexual experiences in the West result in mere self-gratification without any sharing of the experience. Masturbation is the culmination of this tendency to self-gratification. This can only temporarily relax tensed nerves. It can never offer the individual the bliss of the temporary union of two individuals into a single personality, the main attraction of sex. At the moment of orgasm there is no limit of body or individuality, there is a reuniting of the male and female principles which are the foundation of the universe. Masturbation merely builds up the wall that separates male from female; coitus is meant for eliminating the barriers between two people, for sharing openness and for communion.

When the *ojas* is depleted through continuous and repeated sex, the autoimmune system is affected, causing increased susceptibility to physical disease. Overindulgence in sex results in mind/body disharmony and must be treated by abstinence from sex for at least one month. This period allows the aura to build up once again. One reason individuals are unwilling to surrender themselves to each other in union is that they are not confident of their identities when too much sex or other stress has reduced the aura so much that it can no longer protect them from distressing influences of the external world. Such people feel physical danger when anyone gets too near them because they know subconsciously that they lack any *ojas* for defense against non-harmonious thoughts and intentions. When two people sleep near one another, even if they do not indulge in sex, their personalities will alter because of the intermingling of their auras. A *vata* person will calm noticeably when he or she sleeps near a *kapha* person, and so on. The stronger one's will power, the less one will be adversely affected by someone else's aura; hence the need for celibacy when the *ojas* is depleted.

Selective celibacy is useless, however. This is the practice of observing physical celibacy while actively encouraging sexual fantasizing. The continuous pressure of sexual thoughts on the brain is more detrimental to the *ojas* than the physical loss of *ojas* during the

sex act. Moreover, the mental duplicity and deception involved leads to deviousness and perversity of mind, and thence disease.

Sex is meant for a higher purpose than the wasting of *ojas*. When true harmony exists between two partners, it is possible to actually increase *ojas* through sex. Ayurveda says that the true virilizing medicine is a spouse or partner who loves you. Sex must always be avoided when it is not improving the body/mind harmony because the sexual act is regarded as a sacrament, a sacrificial act in which there is absolute sacrifice of all restraint of doubt and uncertainty. The human sexual act is a recapitulation on a limited scale of the macrocosmic occurrence that created the universe, and must be approached with due reverence.

QUESTIONS FOR THE AYURVEDIC HOME STUDY COURSE

Lessons 9 - 12

Please answer each question as completely as possible.

1) What is *satmya*? Which foods should never be made *satmya* and why?

2) What are the main preparation modes of medicinal plants? Which method would be most useful for roots?

3) What is the main use of barberry? Of fenugreek? Of sandalwood?

4) Give the *rasa*, *virya*, and *vipaka* of basil, hibiscus and rose. What effect do these plants have on the *doshas*?

5) What are the tests for properly prepared metallic oxides? What are the advantages of metallic medications?

6) Why is it important to wake before dawn? What are simple methods for eliminating constipation?

7) What are the advantages of exercise? How can you determine the appropriate amount of exercise for you?

8) What are the Enemies of the Human Being? What are the different types of sleep? Why is it important to establish a daily routine?

9) What are the types of rejuvenation? Write some simple rejuvenating medicines and their properties.

10) Applying the knowledge of constitution and the healing principles you have understood in the book and course, write the things which are necessary for you to do in order to create a balanced healthy life.

Please complete your answers and, if you have access to e-mail, send them as an attachment to dseeger@ayurveda.com. If you do not have e-mail, please return completed answers to:

The Ayurvedic Institute
P.O. Box 23445
Albuquerque, NM 87192-1445
(505) 291-9698
Monday to Friday 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

APPENDIX

History*

Name ______________________________ Date ______________

Sex ________ Birthdate ________ Age ________ Height ________ Weight ________

Blood Type ☐ O ☐ A ☐ B ☐ AB Last Blood Pressure ____ / ____ (Date: ________)

PRESENT HEALTH PROBLEMS	(LEAVE BLANK)
#1 Problem / Symptoms:	
Date Symptoms Began:	
Past Treatments/Medications:	
#2 Problem / Symptoms:	
Date Symptoms Began:	
Past Treatments/Medications:	
#3 Problem / Symptoms:	
Date Symptoms Began:	
Past Treatments/Medications:	
#4 Problem / Symptoms:	
Date Symptoms Began:	
Past Treatments/Medications:	

* *These forms are for the student's use for self-evaluation.*

Past Health History

Age at Onset	List your past major illnesses, injuries and surgeries

Women: List your history of pregnancies, deliveries, abortions (if any), and contraceptive usage. Also indicate the length of your menstrual cycle.

Family Health History

Relation	List major illnesses and causes of death
Mother:	
Father:	
Sisters/Brothers:	
Maternal Grandmother:	
Maternal Grandfather:	
Paternal Grandmother:	
Paternal Grandfather:	

Body Systems Appraisal

Check off those items below which apply to you on a chronic ar recurrent basis at the present time or within the past year.

1. Head, Ears, Eyes, Nose and Throat

- ☐ Migraine headaches
- ☐ Headaches
- ☐ Dizziness
- ☐ Fainting spells
- ☐ Earaches, discharges
- ☐ Hearing loss
- ☐ Ringing in the ears
- ☐ Pain/soreness in eyes
- ☐ Deteriorating vision
- ☐ Cataracts
- ☐ Glaucoma
- ☐ Thinning/loss of hair
- ☐ Nose colds
- ☐ Nasal/sinus congestion
- ☐ Nasal discharges
- ☐ Hay fever-type allergies
- ☐ Nose bleeding
- ☐ Gums bleeding
- ☐ Gums receding
- ☐ Numerous dental cavities
- ☐ Wear dentures
- ☐ Oral infections
- ☐ Mouth/lip ulcers or lesions

2. Respiratory System

- ☐ Shortness of breath with exertion
- ☐ Wheezing
- ☐ Painful breathing
- ☐ Persistent cough
- ☐ Frequent chest colds
- ☐ Lung congestion
- ☐ Coughing up blood
- ☐ Coughing up mucous

3. Cardiovascular and Lymph Systems

- ☐ Tension/pain behind breastbone possibly radiating down the left arm, especially after physical exertion
- ☐ Fast heart beat
- ☐ Irregular heart beat
- ☐ Leg pain upon exercise
- ☐ Hands/feet become numb easily
- ☐ Painful hands/feet due to coldness
- ☐ Varicose veins
- ☐ Lymph node swelling

4. Musculo-Skeletal System

- ☐ Swelling/pain in joints
- ☐ Limitations on joint motion
- ☐ Muscle weakness/atrophy
- ☐ Muscle/bone deformities
- ☐ Muscle/bone pains in back or neck
- ☐ Muscle/bone pains elsewhere

5. Neurologic System

☐ Loss of taste, smell or touch	☐ Muscle/limb coordination problems
☐ Tingling sensations	☐ Difficulty in remembering
☐ Tremors in limbs	☐ Difficulty in thinking clearly

6. Urinary System

☐ Loss of control of urination	☐ Pain in kidney/groin area
☐ Painful urination	☐ Frequent kidney/bladder infections
☐ Urine retention, dribbling	☐ Urine is odorous
☐ Frequent daytime urination	☐ Color of urine is pale yellow
☐ Frequent nighttime urination	☐ Color of urine is medium yellow
☐ Blood in urine	☐ Color of urine is dark yellow

7. Reproductive System

(Female)	☐ Pain on intercourse
☐ Premenstrual tension	☐ Reduced or minimal sex drive
☐ Menstruation prolonged	☐ Excessive sex drive
☐ Menstruation too frequent	
☐ Menses scanty or missed	**(Male)**
☐ Depression at menstruation	☐ Prostate gland swollen, painful
☐ Menopausal hot flashes	☐ Impotence problems
☐ Swelling, pain, lumps in breasts	☐ Abnormal discharges from penis
☐ Pain in ovaries	☐ Genital ulcers or lesions
☐ Abnormal vaginal discharges	☐ Pain on intercourse
☐ Frequent vaginal infections	☐ Reduced or minimal sex drive
☐ Genital ulcers or lesions	☐ Excessive sex drive

8. Gastrointestinal System

☐ Heaviness/bloating after eating	☐ Hemorrhoids
☐ Frequent indigestion	☐ Excessive intestinal gas
☐ Pain/burning in stomach area	☐ Blood in stools
☐ Gallbladder discomfort	☐ Stools are odorous
☐ Diarrhea	Stools are: clay color ☐ brown ☐
☐ Less than 2 bowel movements daily	Stools are: loose ☐ soft ☐ hard ☐
☐ Difficult/painful bowel movements	Stools: float ☐ *or* sink ☐

Health Status and Habits

1. **Energy Level**
   Rate your basic energy level on a scale of 1 - 100% (optimum) ______

2. **Overall Health Quotient**
   Rate your overall health on a scale of 1 - 100% (optimum) ______

3. **Sleep**
   How many hours of sleep do you usually get a night? ______
   How many hours of daytime sleep do you usually get with naps? ______
   Is your sleep position on your: side ☐ back ☐ stomach ☐?
   Is your sleep usually: sound ☐ or interrupted ☐?
   Do you usually wake up refreshed in the morning? Yes ☐ No ☐

4. **Body Weight**
   How much did you weigh at age 21? (Answer in pounds) ______
   How much more ☐ or less ☐ do you weigh now than at age 21? ______
   How much weight have you gained ☐ or lost ☐ in the past year? ______
   Do you feel that you are presently underweight? Yes ☐ No ☐
   Do you feel that you are presently overweight? Yes ☐ No ☐
   Are you satisfied with your present body tone and shape? Yes ☐ No ☐

5. **Drug Allergies**
   List below the names of the drugs to which you have known allergic responses.

6. **Pharmaceutical Medications**
   List below the pharmaceutical drugs (prescription and non-prescription) which you regularly take, explain what condition they ar taken for, and specify the amount taken on a daily basis.

DRUG	AMOUNT	REASON TAKEN

7. **Exercise**

Describe the type, amount and frequency of vigorous physical activity you engage in on a regular basis.

____

____

Is vigorous physical activity difficult for you? If yes, explain why. Yes ☐ No ☐

____

____

8. **Sunlight Exposure**

On a regular daily basis, do you spend at least 20 minutes outdoors during daylight hours without wearing glasses or sunglasses? Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you regularly sunbathe between the hours of 11:00 AM and 4:00 PM during the warmer months of the year? Yes ☐ No ☐

9. **Emotional/Mental Stress**

Are you easily prone to becoming upset or irritable? Yes ☐ No ☐

Rate the amount of stress you are currently experiencing on a scale of 1 - 10 (highest). _____

If you are presently experiencing a great deal of stress, please explain what you feel is causing the stress.

____

____

10. **Smoking**

Do you regularly smoke at the present time? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, explain the quantity of cigarettes, cigars or pipe tobacco that you smoke on a daily basis. ____

If you do smoke, have you made any serious attempts to give up smoking? Yes ☐ No ☐

11. **Alcohol**

Do you drink alcoholic beverages more than once a week? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, explain the type and amount of such beverages usually consumed and how often they are consumed.

____

____

12. **Recreational Drugs**

Do you use recreational drugs with any sort of regularity? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, explain the nature and frequency of the usage.

____

____

Environmental Stresses and Contaminants

Check off those items which apply to you on a constant or frequent basis.

______ Sit or stand in a slumped, hunched over or unerect position.
______ Sit on metal chairs for long periods of time.
______ Stand on bare concrete floors for long periods of time.
______ Underwear clothes made of primarily synthetic fabrics.
______ Outerwear clothes made of primarily synthetic fabrics.
______ Nightwear clothes made of primarily synthetic fabrics.
______ Hats, wigs or hairpieces made primarily of synthetic fabrics.
______ Bedding sheets or blankets made of mainly synthetic fabrics.
______ Use an electric blanket for warmth in bed during the colder months.
______ Wear eyeglasses/sunglasses with metallic frames.
______ Wear tinted eyeglasses.
______ Wear sunglasses nearly all the time when outdoors.
______ Wear high-heeled shoes.
______ Wear wrist watches with radium coated dials.
______ Wear battery-powered wrist watches.
______ Wear partial metal dentures which cross the midline of the body.
______ Have mercury amalgam fillings in your teeth.
______ Use perfumes, deodorants, shampoos, conditioners, dyes, permanent solutions, soaps, mouthwashes, toothpastes made of synthetic chemicals.
______ Live or work in an especially noisy environment.
______ Listen to rock music or jazz.
______ Watch television for long periods of time, i.e., over an hour at a time.
______ Work or sit under fluorescent lighting for long periods of time.
______ Work in front of a video console monitor for long periods of time.
______ Cook at a gas stove.
______ Use a microwave oven.
______ Use aluminum cookware, utensils or packaging foil or baking powders.
______ Have had dental/medical X-rays or operate an X-ray machine.
______ Subject to irritating chemical fumes/agents or dust particles.
______ Work or live indoors where the rooms are saturated with tobacco smoke.
______ Work or travel in areas saturated with auto exhaust fumes.
______ Work or live near high-powered electrical lines or microwave transmitters.
______ Work or live in buildings where the insulation, walls, flooring, etc. includes such substances as formaldehyde, fiberglass, asbestos, lead.

Diet Background

1. Appetite and Digestion

Rate the strength of your appetite on a scale of 1 - 100%. ________

Rate the strength of your digestion on a scale of 1 - 100%. ________

Do you experience indigestion frequently? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, explain: ____________________

____

2. Diet Changes

Have you made any major changes in your diet during the past ten years? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, explain these changes: ____________________

____

____

3. Food Sensitivities

Have you ever undergone special tests to determine your own food sensitivities or food allergies? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, describe the type of test and explain whether the test was helpful.

____

____

____

List in the space below any foods that are suspected of causing indigestion or allergic-type responses for you.

________	________	________
________	________	________
________	________	________

4. Drinking Water

Indicate the type of drinking water you commonly use.

☐ City water (fluoridated)	☐ City water (non-fluoridated)
☐ Private well water	☐ Bottled spring/well water
☐ Distilled water	☐ Carbon filtered city water
☐ Reverse osmosis water	☐ Other type ____________

5. List below the type and amount of nutritional supplements/herbs that you currently are taking on a regular basis. (Amount)

____________________	________
____________________	________
____________________	________
____________________	________
____________________	________
____________________	________
____________________	________
____________________	________

7-Day Diet History

Record the specific food and beverages taken and their approximate quantities.

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACKS/OTHER
Sunday				
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				

GLOSSARY

Lessons 1 - 12

abhyantara marga — the internal or gastrointestinal pathway, the alimentary canal and *rasa dhatu*.

adana — period from the winter solstice to the summer solstice, when the sun draws energy away from the earth.

agni — essential form of fire and heat; the basis of good digestion. Digestive fire; also, glandular secretions.

ahamkara — the ego.

ahara rasa — nutrient material, acted upon in the digestive tract by *rasa dhatu agni*.

alochaka — form of *pitta dosha* found especially in the eyes; see p. 13.

ama — toxin, resulting from weak digestion.

amalaki — Indian gooseberry.

ambuvahasrotas — channel concerned with water metabolism.

angula — unit of measurement specific to each individual; equal to the width of the first interphalangeal joint of the middle finger of the right hand.

annavahasrotas — channel concerned with the digestion of solid food.

antahkarana — the "internal instrument" comprised of *manas*, *chitta*, *buddhi*, and *ahamkara*; mind.

anupana — substance administered with a medication to enhance treatment, prevent side effects, speed absorption, and minimize the essential dose of the medication.

apana — form of *vata dosha*, found especially in the colon and pelvis; see p. 11.

artava — *dhatu* related to reproduction and creativity, acts with *shukra*; see p. 29.

asthi — *dhatu* related to bone; see p. 29.

avalambaka — form of *kapha dosha*, found especially in the chest; see p. 14.

bahya marga — external pathway; includes all the other *dhatus* besides *rasa.*

bhrajaka — form of *pitta dosha*, found especially in the skin; see p. 12.

bodhaka — form of *kapha dosha*, found especially in the mouth; see p. 14.

buddhi — the faculty of discrimination.

chitraka — leadwort.

chitta — the consciousness.

dhatu — an element, either 1) one of the seven *dhatus*, the constituent tissues which support life, see p. 27 or 2) one of the three *dhatus*, the balanced forms of *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*, which are also the supporters of the organism.

dosha — term used to describe the *dhatus vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* when they are out of balance; non-physical forces which can lead to an accumulation of physical waste products.

dukha — unhappiness, ill health; literally, "bad space."

ghee — clarified butter. For instructions on preparation, see *Ayurvedic Cooking for Self-Healing.*

jivana — making one feel alive.

kala — an osmotic-like metabolic membrane which acts as a kind of substrate for each *dhatu agni*, separating the essential form of the *dhatu* from the non-essential.

khichadi — an Indian dish of rice and split mung beans.

kledaka — form of *kapha dosha*, found especially in the stomach; see p. 14.

koshta marga — synonymous with *abhyantara marga.*

madana phala — a nut used for emetic medication in India.

madhyama marga — the middle or vital pathway.

mahasrotas — see *annavahasrotas*, synonymous.

majja — *dhatu* related to the bone marrow and nerves; see p. 29.

majjadharakala	the functional membrane/substrate for *majja agni* (the transformative force of fire for *majja*).
malas	wastes that must be excreted from the system, but which serve the body between their creation and excretion, i.e., feces, urine, and sweat.
mamsa	*dhatu* related to muscle tissue; see p. 29.
mamsadharakala	the membrane/substrate for *mamsa agni*.
manas	the thinking mind.
manovahasrotas	the channel which covers the whole body, through which the mind moves.
margas	pathways in which the *doshas* flow.
marma marga	synonymous with *madhyama marga*.
meda	*dhatu* related to fat; see p. 29.
medadharakala	the membrane/substrate for *meda agni*.
mutravahasrotas	channel for excretion of urine.
netra tarpana	treatment for insomnia, submersion of the eyes in oil.
ojas	the essential form of water within the body; the ultimate product of good digestion. It acts as a receptacle for the subtle fire within the body.
pachaka	form of *pitta dosha*, found especially in the small intestine; see p. 12.
panchakarma	purification therapy.
pippali	Indian long pepper.
pittadharakala	the membrane/substrate for *rakta agni*.
prabhava	the exception, or unusual effect.
prajna paradha	obstruction of wisdom, mental perversity.
prakruti	the first creation, the great ocean from whence comes all life, or 2) the individual inborn constitution.

prana form of *vata dosha*, found especially in the lungs and heart; see p. 10. Also, the essential form of air within the body.

pranavahasrotas channel (*srotas*) concerned with intake of nutrients to the lungs.

pranayama special breathing exercises. See Chapter XII, *Ayurveda: The Science of Self-Healing.*

prinana sense of joy and love.

purana filling.

purisha feces.

purishadharakala membrane/substrate for *asthi agni*; considered to be located in the colon lining.

purishavahasrotas channel for excretion of feces.

purusharthas Human aims, see p. 124.

rajas mental state of aggressiveness and hyperactivity; mental counterpart to *vata*.

rajavahasrotas channel for excretion of menstrual fluid.

rakta *dhatu* related to the blood and invigoration; see p. 35.

ranjaka form of *pitta dosha*, found especially in the liver and spleen; see p. 12.

rasa *dhatu* related to the plasma and nourishment; see p. 29.

rasa the first of the seven *dhatus*; also taste effect.

rasayana rejuvenation therapy.

rishis seers of ancient India.

sadhaka form of *pitta dosha*, found especially in the brain and heart; see p. 12.

samana form of ~~*pitta*~~ vata *dosha*, found especially in the alimentary canal; see p. 10.

sat isabgol a species of psyllium; high in fiber.

satmya the body's habitual response to the mind's habit.

sattva — mental state of clarity without mental chatter or confusion; considered mental counterpart of *pitta*.

shamana — palliation.

shirshasana — yoga posture, the head stand.

shleshaka — form of *kapha dosha*, found especially in the joints; see p. 14.

shleshma — another name for *kapha*.

shleshmadharakala — membrane for *rasa agni*.

shodana — purification.

shukra — *dhatu* related to reproduction and creativity; see p. 29.

shukradharakala — membrane related to transformation of elements by *shukra agni*.

sneha — lavish love, related to *meda*.

srotamsi — channels in which *vata* flows, pathways of assimilation, digestion, and elimination. Includes the *srotas* that nourishes each *dhatu*, e.g., *rasavahasrotas*, *raktavahasrotas*, etc.

stanyavahasrotas — channel for breast milk.

sukha — happiness and health; literally "good space."

surya namaskara — a group of *yoga* postures known as the Sun Salutation.

sutras — verses, used in Ayurveda to jog the memory and stimulate recall of specific information about diagnosis and treatment.

svedavahasrotas — channel for the excretion of sweat.

takra — a blend of churned yogurt, water and spices; also sometimes known as "buttermilk."

tamas — mental state of inertia and ignorance; mental counterpart of *kapha*.

Tantra — branch of Science of Life which focuses on the mental aspects of being.

tarpaka — form of *kapha dosha*, found especially in the brain and spinal cord; see p. 14.

tejas	fire element as it relates to mental function; subtle fire throughout the body.
trikatu	mixture of dry ginger, black pepper, and long pepper.
triphala	a medication consisting of three specific Indian herbs, often used to aid elimination.
udana	form of *vata dosha*, found especially in the throat, head and mind-brain; see p. 10.
upadhatu	a tissue which is nourished by a *dhatu* but which does not itself nourish any *dhatu*, a kind of nutritional dead end.
utklishta	increased in their own locations, used to describe the *doshas*.
vajikarana	virilizing medication.
vipaka	the post-digestive effect of a food.
virya	the heating and cooling properties of a food.
visarga	period from the summer solstice to the winter solstice, when the sun releases energy to the earth.
Vishnu	Hindu god, the Embodiment of life preservation.
vishvabheshaja vati	universal medication pill made of dry and fresh ginger root.
vyadhavasthakala	the disease time.
vyana	form of *vata dosha* found throughout the body, but especially in the bones, muscles, arms, and legs; see p. 10.
Yoga	branch of Science of Life concentrating on the spiritual aspects of being.
yoga nidra	state of complete physical inertia coupled with retention of mental awareness.
yukti	the principle that treatment is a coalition of many parts, an effect produced from many essential causes.

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